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INCREASE IN LEARNING: Essays in Honor of James G. Van Buren

Edited by
Robert J. Owens, Jr.
and
Barbara E. Hamm

*"Give instruction to a wise man,
and he will be still wiser;
teach a righteous man and he
will increase in learning.
The fear of the Lord is the
beginning of wisdom,
and the knowledge of the Holy
One is insight."*

Proverbs 9:9-10

**Manhattan Christian College
Manhattan, Kansas**

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PREFACE

The abilities and contributions of James Van Buren present themselves over such a broad spectrum, it is often difficult to believe that a single individual is at the center of this panoply of accomplishments. A gifted intellectual, most of whose writing has been for the "common man"—a popular preacher, who has chosen the college classroom as his main sphere of work—a published *literateur*, who also ranks as a first-rate scholar of the history of the Disciples of Christ—a demanding teacher with an awe-inspiring classroom presence, who devotes himself in large measure to the solitude of the writer's study—a man deeply committed to the historic Christian faith, who has firmly opposed efforts to merge the Restorationist tradition with Fundamentalist theology—James Van Buren is all of these. In lesser men, such diversity might become fragmentation or contradiction. With him, the richness of his gifts and the breadth of his interests simply demonstrate Browning's truth: "Who keeps one end in view, Makes all things serve."

In seeking to pay tribute to James Van Buren on his sixty-fifth birthday (March 29, 1979), this volume partakes of the variety that has marked his work. Over the years, his teaching and writing have centered in three areas: English and American Literature, Biblical interpretation and theology, and Restorationist thought and history. The essays that follow apportion themselves accordingly. If one seeks the unifying element for the book, therefore, he will find it in the career of Jim Van Buren and, more important, in the Christian faith which has motivated and shaped his work and which is reflected in all these essays. All the contributors, in addition to being especially competent in their respective fields, have had association with Dr. Van Buren in some way.

The editors wish to express their gratitude to Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Marshall of Wymore, Nebraska, for generously underwriting the project. Without the funds which they provided, this book could never have been produced. In a day when publishing costs are soaring and academic titles are at an increased disadvantage in the competition of

the marketplace, the support of such committed individuals as the Marshalls is essential. They deserve the hearty praise of James Van Buren's many friends and admirers, as does W. F. Lown, President of Manhattan Christian College, who labored earnestly in the final weeks before publication to bring the project to a successful conclusion.

Special thanks are due also to Susan Clowe, Mary Ann Owens, Ralph Small of Standard Publishing, and Celia Cupp of Christian Board of Publication, each of whom provided valuable help with the preparation of the Van Buren bibliography.

Finally, it is a happy duty to acknowledge our debt to Marge Van Buren. Not only was she willing to ferret out crucial information for the biographical and bibliographical essays, she gladly enlisted her wifely skills in the service of our complicated conspiracy to keep the project a surprise for Dr. Van Buren. More important still, as friends of Jim Van Buren will have often heard him say, Marge has been his supportive companion in thought and work, as well as in home life and travels. The contribution of her life to his preaching, teaching, and writing has been immeasurable. It is, therefore, our wish that this volume extend its tribute to Marge Van Buren also as we celebrate the sixty-fifth year of her distinguished husband.

Robert J. Owens, Jr.
Barbara E. Hamm

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ABBREVIATIONS

AB	<i>Anchor Bible</i> . Edited by W. F. Albright and D. N. Freedman. New York, Doubleday.
ASV	American Standard Version of the Bible (= Revised Version, 1901).
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> , Washington, D.C.
CE	<i>College English</i> , Urbana, Illinois.
CS	<i>Christian Standard</i> , Cincinnati, Ohio.
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i> , San Marino, California.
Int	<i>Interpretation</i> , Richmond, Virginia.
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> , Missoula, Montana.
JEGP	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i> , Urbana, Illinois.
MQ	<i>Midwest Quarterly</i> , Pittsburgh, Kansas.
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i> , Cambridge, England.
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i> , Leiden, The Netherlands.
RSV	Revised Standard Version of the Bible (1952, 1971).
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1973. 10 vols.
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> , Berlin, Germany.



James Geil Van Buren

JAMES GEIL VAN BUREN

by W. F. Lown

“A big man by many standards.” This aptly describes James G. Van Buren. His commanding physical stature amply houses a big heart and a keen mind. His friends treasure his fraternity, and his enemies are nonexistent. His influence has been extended many-fold through his preaching, his writing, and almost two decades on the faculty of a Christian college. With Job, he delights in the Almighty and, surely, the Almighty delights in him.

The Child

Born in Gloversville, New York, on March 29, 1914, James was an only child. His father and grandfather owned a trucking business and hauled skins to leather mills and glove factories in Gloversville and Johnstown, New York. The family also owned a second hand store. A child of the “Great Depression,” James was no stranger to work and was involved in both of the family enterprises.

His mother died when he was a senior in high school and he made his home with his grandparents, who lived across the street from a family named Frank. Their daughter Marge was later to become his wife.

The Student

Dr. Van Buren is universally recognized as one of the most outstanding scholars of the Restoration heritage in our generation. This occurred not by accident, but resulted rather from a naturally good mind combined with educational opportunities and hard work.

In high school Jim was awarded the coveted "Laurel G" pin for his scholastic achievements. Besides excelling in American history, he was also interested in drama, journalism, and debate. He was, in addition, an outstanding basketball player and was part of a championship debate team.

One of his great disappointments came following high school graduation. He had been accepted as a freshman at Bethany College, but the Depression made it financially impossible for him to attend. About this time Jim learned of Practical Bible Training School in Binghamton, New York. He borrowed money and matriculated. The school was fundamentalistic and non-denominational, and most of the subjects taught were Biblical ones.

Following graduation from the school, he accepted the invitation of the Clarence, New York, Church of Christ to be its preacher. After five years in this role he enrolled in Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana, where he received his A.B. degree in 1942. He completed his seminary work in the School of Religion, Butler University, and was awarded the B.D. degree in 1946.

During the ensuing years Jim developed a deep interest in literature in general and English literature in particular. In 1967 he completed the doctoral program in English literature at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, and was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy degree. His dissertation, written under the direction of Dr. Charles A. Pennel explored "The Servant-Son Metaphor in the Poetry of George Herbert."

The Preacher

As has been previously noted, following his Bible institute graduation, Jim Van Buren was called to the "Niagra Frontier" to preach in the little town of Clarence, New York. His first "convert" in that ministry was his wife, Marge, who had been reared in the Presbyterian church. Imbued with the spirit of Biblical conversion, Jim baptized her into Christ. It was here that a godly older preacher in the congregation "went over his sermons" with him, a practice which proved most helpful.

After a five-year ministry, and upon deciding to further his education in Indiana, Jim served the Prairie Green Church in Illinois, and churches at Pine Village and Trafalgar in Indiana. Having completed

his seminary work, Jim accepted the call to serve the great Central Christian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where he was to minister for fourteen years. During this time the congregation "swarmed" several times to start new churches in the greater Pittsburgh area.

Dr. Van Buren is in constant demand as a speaker, lecturer, and preacher, whether for special occasions, national conventions, or Lord's Day morning worship. He was invited to give the 1968 P.H. Welshimer Lectures at Milligan College, Tennessee, and the 1969 New Testament Lectureship at Northwest Christian College, Eugene, Oregon.

The Person

It is helpful for one to know James Van Buren. He is a man of a thousand interests and is appropriately excited about them all. He is an avid connoisseur of gustatorial delights. He can wax eloquent over a dill pickle aged in wood!

He is a man of ebullient humor. Some years ago he attended a high school football game with a friend. (The Van Burens are sports fanatics, sometimes watching one game on television and listening to another by radio—while reading a book simultaneously!) Jim became so caught up in the event that he began to cheer the home team vociferously, even at times when others were silent. The friend threatened to leave at the point where Van cried at the top of his lungs, "Advance the ball valiantly, men!"

The writer once twitted him about his exaggerated girth as contrasted with the writer's temporary success with a crash diet, whereupon he retorted, "There are two venial sins, pride and gluttony, and I have chosen the lesser of the two!"

He is as prolific in his descriptive "binges" as he is in all other things. No one can manipulate an adjective with more dexterity than he. One can only sit enchanted as his powers of description are unleashed.

The Man of Letters

Jim's interest in books no doubt began in his grandfather's second hand store. Used books and magazines were there at his desire. Here, as well as in his student experiences, books became his personal friends and he learned to call them by their first names.

During the five years of his ministry at Clarence, New York, he took a correspondence course in the works of Shakespeare. The course requirements dictated that he read every one of Shakespeare's plays, writing a paper on each. This interest led him to select English literature as the discipline in which he did his doctoral work. His general love for literature has driven him to become a voracious reader and a prolific author. A list of his works may be seen elsewhere in this volume.

The Brotherhood Leader

Very often the name of James Van Buren crops up when significant movements are taking place within the brotherhood of Christian Churches. He has been a long-time student and admirer of the writings of the Restoration fathers, those of Alexander Campbell in particular. Consequently, when thoughtful planning and perceptive understanding are needed, the name Van Buren is almost certain to be considered for counsel. He has been active in the leadership of the North American Christian Convention since at least 1948 and has served that gathering as both Vice President (1954) and President (1955). He was one of the founding fathers of Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee. In 1955 he was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree by Milligan College in recognition of distinguished service.

The Family Man

Van Buren's mother was the primary force in his early Christian experiences. She was a very devoted mother and saw to it that Jim was in Sunday School and worship regularly at the Bleecker Street Church of Christ in Gloversville. (There were only sixty Christian Churches in the state, and Bleecker Street was the only one in that county.) Moreover, it had been her dream that he would grow up to be a minister.

Jim and Marge were married on November 6, 1934. Marge, in addition to faithfully fulfilling her role as wife and mother, has served as secretary to top university executives. Three sons, Bob, Dick, and Lynn, were born to them, and today several grandchildren are their delight.

The Educator

Jim Van Buren has always been a teacher. His sermons have always been teaching messages. Many colleges have called him for addresses and lectureships. Several had urged him to leave the pulpit for the classroom, and in 1960 he accepted the invitation of Manhattan Christian College, Manhattan, Kansas, to become Professor of Theology and Humanities, an appointment which he continues to hold.

He is a scintillating, extremely well-informed teacher. Streams of information and inspiration flow from him. Students are drawn to him and awed by him. They remember his breath-taking lectures—and his difficult examinations.

On one occasion this writer listened as he talked about having to fail a student who would not do his work, and there was a tear on his cheek. He loves his students and immerses his life in them. Almost universally, alumni on returning to the campus speak of something they learned in his classroom and indicate their profound respect for their mentor.

A Man of God

In addition to Jim's mother, who faithfully exerted her Christian influence upon him, an important element in his younger years was "Brother" Gustavus Adolphus Reinl, for many years the preaching minister of the Bleecker Street Church. Beyond this was Doctor Erb, who had studied under "Brother" J. W. McGarvey and who counseled him during his early ministry. Several years of study under Frederick Kershner, Arthur Holmes, Toyozo Nakarai, Dean Everest Walker, and others, deepened his roots in Christ, alerted him to the Restoration "principle," and in general gave him an exemplary background in "the Way."

James G. Van Buren is a godly man in whose heart there is no guile and whose mind has been placed at the Master's disposal.

Benediction

Those who have worshipped with "Dr. Van," as his students affectionately call him, have often heard him pray the following scriptural benediction (Hebrew 13:20-21):

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen

That has become James Van Buren's prayer as he leads and teaches us. It is our prayer for him.

PUBLICATIONS BY JAMES G. VAN BUREN

compiled by Robert J. Owens, Jr.

The aim of the following bibliography is to provide access to all the writings published by James Van Buren from 1935 to July 1, 1978. Only the original appearance of periodical articles has been listed; no effort has been made to include reprintings subsequent to the original publication. Unfortunately, in at least two instances items have been omitted for which neither Dr. Van Buren's records nor publishers' files could provide complete documentation. Readers who can supply information for omissions or errors in the bibliography are invited to correspond with the editors.

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"One Mediator (Views and Reviews)." CS June 5, 1954, 359.

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1955

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"Burned, But Not Consumed." CS December 31, 1955, 841.

"Creative Tensions." CS April 16, 1955, 247.

"Government Publications." CS October 22, 1955, 681.

"Here and There in Books Old and New." CS August 13, 1955, 521.

"How To Do Everything." CS March 12, 1955, 168.

"Informative Magazines." CS March 26, 1955, 200.

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1956

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"Articles on the Revised Standard Version." CS July 28, 1956, 473.

"Brief Statements of New Testament Truth." CS November 24, 1956, 745.

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“‘Interview with India.’” CS June 23, 1956, 393; June 30, 1956, 403.

“‘Out of This World.’” CS August 25, 1956, 537.

“Religions of Mystery.” CS January 28, 1956, 57.

“Some Books Worth Mentioning.” CS March 3, 1956, 137.

“The Church in the Gray Flannel Suit.” CS October 20, 1956, 665.

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“The Everlasting Man.” CS October 6, 1956, 633.

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1957

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“The Christian Product (Views and Reviews).” CS February 16, 1957, 109.

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1958

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1959

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"Outgrown Toys." CS January 3, 1959, 7.
"Sex — Sacred or Sordid?" CS June 6, 1959, 315.
"The Local Church in Missions." CS October 17, 1959, 577.

1960

"A Bald-headed Prophet." CS January 9, 1960, 22.
"Faith Wins!" CS August 20, 1960, 531.
"God Lives." CS July 30, 1960, 433.
"Jesus Saves!" CS August 6, 1960, 499.
"Prayer Overcomes!" CS August 13, 1960, 515.
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"Spiritual Bifocals (Views and Reviews)." CS March 26, 1960, 200.
"The Nature of Nature Worship." CS January 2, 1960, 8.
"Uneasiness, A Sign of Hope." CS December 31, 1960, 847.
"Unless Some Man Guides Me." CS July 9, 1960, 442.
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1961

"A Christian Agnostic?" CS April 15, 1961, 227.
"Interpreting Our Times." CS December 30, 1961, 831.
" 'Temples Made With Hands.' " CS December 2, 1961, 767.
"The Christian Humanist." CS May 6, 1961, 289.
"The Christian Rationalist." CS April 29, 1961, 269.
"The Christian Skeptic." CS April 22, 1961, 249.
" 'This Great and Wide Sea.' " CS November 18, 1961, 733.

1962

" 'A House For the Name of the Lord.' " CS January 13, 1962, 21.
"Chaucer and Christianity." CS October 27, 1962, 677.
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"Museum Musings." CS February 3, 1962, 75.
"No Confidence In Externals." CS December 1, 1962, 763.
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"The Split-Level Preacher." CS October 13, 1962, 643.

1963

“Sara Henderson Hay.” CS January 5, 1963, 9.
“The Craftsman’s Hand.” CS May 18, 1963, 307-309.
“The Prophet’s Tongue.” CS May 25, 1963, 323.
“The Shepherd’s Heart.” CS May 11, 1963, 295.
“The Watchman’s Eye.” CS June 1, 1963, 339.

1964

“C. S. Lewis.” CS February 1, 1964, 69.
“Sinful Pleasure.” CS July 4, 1964, 424.

1965

“Open Membership.” CS April 24, 1965, 261.
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1966

“Concerning Consecration.” CS March 12, 1966, 171.
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1967

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1968

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1969

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“Christ, the Lonely Human.” CS March 29, 1969, 198.
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“Christ, the Suffering Man.” CS March 22, 1969, 182.
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“Christianity—One View in Kansas City.” CS June 14, 1969, 375.
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1970

“Among Ourselves.” *CS* January 3, 1970, 7.
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“Game of Life.” *CS* March 21, 1970, 279.
“Main Currents in Christendom.” *CS* January 10, 1970, 31.
“Reflections on the Restoration Plea.” *CS* July 12, 1970, 663.
“Some Books of Significance.” *CS* January 17, 1970, 55.
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1971

“Christian Faith and Modern Credulity.” *CS* October 10, 1971, 915..
“Divine Human Fusion.” *CS* April 25, 1971, 407; May 2, 1971, 423.
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“Spirit and Reason.” *CS* July 4, 1971, 618.
“When an Old Story Is News.” *CS* November 28, 1971, 1098.

1972

“Asaph.” *CS* April 2, 1972, 301.
“Matched With God’s Hour.” *CS* October 1, 1972, 869.
“Restoration Tour.” *CS* March 5, 1972, 204.
“Semester’s Prayers.” *CS* May 28, 1972, 489.
“Visions of Rapture.” *CS* July 9, 1972, 615.

1973

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June 17, 1973, 543.
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“Romance and Reality in Hoosierland.” *CS* February 15, 1973, 164.

1974

“Cry for Reality.” *CS* November 10, 1974, 1033; November 17, 1974,
1057.
“Hearts Aflame.” *CS* February 17, 1974, 137.
“The Risen and Living One.” *CS* September 22, 1974, 853.

1975

“‘But God.’” *CS* June 22, 1975, 553.

"Death Abolished!" CS March 30, 1975, 275.

"Perversity and Power in Personal Pronouns." CS August 24, 1975, 751.

1976

"Faith That Exclaims!" CS November 28, 1976, 1103.

"Lords of Life." CS January 4, 1976, 14.

"Suddenly!" CS March 14, 1976, 228.

1977

"Christian View of Values." CS June 26, 1977, 578.

"Grace, Truth, and Glory." CS November 6, 1977, 1013.

"Julius." CS January 30, 1977, 95.

"The Great Imperative." CS January 2, 1977, 13.

"The Imperialism of Jesus." CS April 17, 1977, 351.

1978

"Always Yes!" CS February 19, 1978, 168.

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"When Jesus Condemned." CS June 4, 1978, 520.

EPISTLES FROM THISTLE

Beginning in May, 1952, James Van Buren has regularly contributed to *Christian Standard* a short column, "Epistle from Thistle," which points up some spiritual truth in the form of a jaunty letter from pseudonymous "Thistle" to his imaginary reader, "Down." Listed here are all appearances of the Thistle columns to July 1, 1978.

1952

May 3, 286.	August 23, 534.
May 10, 302.	October 4, 632.
June 14, 382.	October 11, 646.
June 28, 413.	October 25, 680.
July 5, 424.	November 8, 712.
July 12, 440.	November 22, 743.
July 26, 472.	November 29, 757.
August 2, 484.	December 13, 790.
August 9, 503.	December 20, 804.
August 16, 516.	December 27, 820.

1953

January 17, 40.	June 6, 360.
January 31, 72.	July 11, 438.
February 7, 86.	August 1, 489.
February 14, 105.	August 8, 500.
February 28, 136.	August 15, 516.
March 7, 150.	August 22, 536.
March 21, 180.	August 29, 548.
March 28, 198.	September 5, 565.
April 4, 212.	September 12, 584.
May 2, 278.	October 10, 548.
May 9, 296.	October 24, 676.
May 30, 345.	December 19, 806.

1954

January 9, 20.	July 3, 422.
January 23, 54.	July 17, 452.
January 30, 70.	July 31, 486.
March 27, 198.	August 21, 534.
April 10, 230.	August 28, 548.
April 17, 244.	October 9, 646.
May 1, 277.	October 30, 692.
May 22, 324.	November 6, 708.
June 12, 374.	December 11, 792.

1955

January 29, 70.	July 30, 489.
February 12, 102.	August 6, 505.
February 19, 120.	August 27, 548.
February 26, 134.	September 10, 584.
March 5, 148.	September 17, 596.
March 12, 166.	October 22, 676.
April 23, 260.	November 12, 726.
May 21, 328.	December 3, 772.
May 28, 340.	December 17, 806.
June 4, 358.	December 24, 820.
July 2, 424.	

1956

January 14, 24.	July 14, 438.
January 21, 40.	July 28, 470.
February 11, 86.	August 11, 500.
February 25, 118.	August 25, 534.
March 3, 132.	September 1, 548.
March 10, 150.	September 8, 566.
March 17, 166.	September 29, 616.
March 31, 200.	October 20, 662.
April 7, 214.	November 10, 712.
May 5, 278.	December 1, 758.
May 12, 292.	December 8, 772.
May 19, 312.	December 15, 790.
June 2, 344.	December 22, 804.
June 30, 404.	December 29, 822.

1957

January 12, 22.	February 23, 124.
January 19, 44.	March 16, 166.
January 26, 60.	October 5, 598.
February 16, 104.	November 30, 720.

1958

January 25, 52.	December 6, 696.
June 21, 356.	

1959

February 21, 104.	June 20, 344.
May 23, 288.	July 18, 400.

1960

February 13, 104.
May 14, 314.
August 6, 500.
August 20, 532.

October 8, 644.
November 5, 713.
December 3, 782.
December 10, 796.

1961

January 7, 4.
February 18, 102.

September 2, 556.

1962

January 20, 38.
January 27, 54.
May 5, 282.

September 15, 582.
September 29, 616.
November 10, 714.

1963

March 9, 148.
October 5, 632.
October 12, 646.

October 19, 662.
November 30, 764.

1964

November 14, 728.

1965

April 10, 232.

April 24, 264.

1967

January 28, 54.

February 25, 118.

1968

June 29, 404.
July 13, 438.

October 5, 632.
December 28, 820.

1969

January 11, 20.
March 22, 184.
June 7, 358.

June 21, 392.
October 25, 676.

1970

April 4, 344.	October 18, 938.
April 11, 374.	November 15, 1042.
May 16, 512.	December 13, 1134.
July 26, 697.	December 27, 1186.
August 30, 786.	

1971

January 3, 14.	August 1, 694.
January 10, 38.	August 8, 710.
January 31, 106.	August 22, 744.
February 7, 132.	September 26, 874.
February 21, 186.	October 10, 918.
March 7, 234.	October 24, 968.
April 18, 380.	October 31, 992.
May 9, 444.	November 14, 1092.
June 13, 570.	December 12, 1140.

1972

April 30, 392.	November 26, 1065.
May 7, 417.	December 24, 1158.

1973

February 4, 94.	July 15, 622.
March 11, 218.	October 14, 912.
March 25, 254.	October 21, 944.
June 24, 562.	

1974

January 20, 50.	July 14, 630.
February 3, 102.	August 18, 742.
February 24, 158.	October 20, 952.
March 17, 158.	October 27, 982.
March 24, 254.	November 17, 1055.
May 19, 442.	December 15, 1152.
June 23, 550	

1975

January 19, 46.	June 29, 580.
February 2, 96.	October 19, 940.
March 16, 224.	November 23, 1062.
April 20, 342.	

1976

February 1, 94.
March 28, 276.

May 16, 442.

1977

April 24, 374.

May 1, 392.

CHURCH-SCHOOL CURRICULUM MATERIAL

The following entries designate either special essays or the lesson material itself written for the Sunday School class quarterlies (based on the International Sunday School Lesson texts) published by Standard Publishing Company.

1948

“Unheralded Bible Characters” in Adult Bible Class.

1949

Basic lesson material for Intermediate Bible Class, Autumn.

1959

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Spring.

1960

“Citizens of God’s Kingdom” in Adult Bible Class, Spring.

1961

“Quotable Quotes” in Adult Bible Class, Autumn.

1962

“Quotable Quotes” in Adult Bible Class, Spring.

1963

“Dialogue Between God and Man” in Adult Bible Class, Summer.

1965

“What Measuring Stick Do You Use?” in Adult Bible Class, Summer.
Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Autumn.

1966

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Spring.

1969

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Winter.

1970

“Dialogue Between God and Man” in Adult Bible Class, Summer
(reprint).

1971

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Winter.

1972

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Winter.

1973

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Autumn.

1974

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Winter.

1975

“Who Am I?” in Adult Bible Class, Autumn.

1976

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Winter.

1978

Basic lesson material for Adult Bible Class, Summer.

I. LITERARY CRITICISM

ALBERT CAMUS: THE ABSURD AND THE REVELATION

by John E. Greenlee

Albert Camus captured the mood of Western man and gave sensitive, articulate voice to the estrangement and alienation which prevail as the dominant characteristics of our culture. No other European writer has been more perceptive in mirroring the contemporary godless human condition. "I paint a portrait of everyone and of no one in particular . . . the picture which I show my contemporaries becomes a mirror."

Because Camus's writings still speak for the troubled Everyman, because this agnostic Algerian Frenchman recognized and said plainly that modern man lives without God or gods, and because there is almost universal recognition that Camus accurately portrays the predominant world-view of our culture, Christians can learn a great deal from him.

To be Christian is not to be aloof from the world. Few of us have escaped the gnawing sense of personal alienation in the universe which infects Western society. At its best, the Christian life is a pilgrimage shared with the masses of mankind who, with us, are seeking the truth. If we are at all serious about communicating the Gospel to our fellow pilgrims, it is essential that we confess our own doubts, identify with the despairing and hopeless, and affirm our faith in Jesus Christ not apart from, but in the midst of, the movement of mankind. We are all on the way.

Camus dares to light a torch in the human caravan and make us look into the faces and the hearts of the pilgrims who are traveling with us, the faces we have often carefully avoided in the cloistered life of the Christian community. More startling still, Camus illuminates the depths of our own hearts and makes us probe the validity of our Christian faith. He challenges the very truths we had hoped we could take for granted.

Camus shows us what we are really up against in our culture when we profess to live by Christian faith. He forces us to ask the uncomfortable, ultimate questions because he asks for the truth, not

shibboleths. He asks for answers to the questions of the suffering of innocents, the problem of evil in a universe which we say is ruled by a beneficent God, and the reason for the strange silence of the Church in the face of human oppression.

Further, Camus reveals the paradox of modern man who nostalgically yearns for the God in whom he no longer believes. It is to modern man in this rejection of God and this yearning for God, to this dilemma of the human condition, that the Christian must address himself. Because Camus enunciates this problem of contemporary man more clearly and compassionately than anyone else in our time, Christians should give serious attention to him. Camus is the spokesman for godless men who want to believe that there is goodness and perhaps a God.

With the foregoing as a rationale, we address ourselves all too briefly to the issue in which Camus most seriously challenges the Christian message, that is, Camus's world-view as summed up in the Absurd versus the Christian faith in Divine revelation.

Careful note should be taken at the outset concerning Camus's meaning of "the Absurd." He did not think of the universe itself as Absurd in the sense that there was no order. The Absurd is not synonymous with chaos. Nor is the Absurd merely a statement of man's rational limitation in comprehending the universe. The Absurd is not a state. It is an encounter. The Absurd occurs when man attempts to understand the order of the universe and his place in it but finds that such comprehension of the totality of existence is beyond his human capacity. The Absurd is not inherent in the world as itself or in man as himself but in the meeting of the two. "The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world."¹

Camus refers to the universe as irrational, that is, beyond the grasp of human reason. This does not imply that there is a lack of order in the universe. It is the relationship of rational man and the incomprehensible universe, the attempt of man to find an explanation for his life in relation to the universe which is the Absurd.

I want everything to be explained to me or nothing. And the reason is impotent when it hears this cry from the heart. The mind aroused by this insistence seeks and finds nothing but contradictions and nonsense. What I

¹ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Random House, 1955) 5.

fail to understand is nonsense. The world is peopled with such irrationals. The world itself, whose single meaning I do not understand, is but a vast irrational.²

The mad emperor in *Caligula* forces his subjects to chant a litany of his abandon of meaning.

Caesonia: Make known to us the truth about this world — which is that it has none.

Patricians: Make known to us the truth about this world — which is that it has none.

This view of human life in the world, which Caligula is intent upon teaching to his subjects, is nihilism. Among Camus's intellectual contemporaries in France nihilism was the dominant concept. But Camus was not a nihilist. *Caligula* is, in fact, Camus's caricature of nihilism. Nihilism resolves the problem of comprehension by denying any ultimate meaning. Camus's insistence is not that the world lacks meaning but that he cannot grasp what that meaning is. The Absurd is the lively tension experienced in the process of confrontation.

Camus admits to the possibility of a "single meaning" of the world. But he denies man's ability to comprehend that meaning. The idea of the Absurd is Camus's realization of man as he is confronting the world as it is. The Absurd is Camus's insistence upon understanding and clarity while facing a universe which he did not believe could ever be understood.

I can negate everything of that part of me that lives on vague nostalgias, except this desire for unity, this longing to solve, this need for clarity and cohesion. . . . I don't know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do not know that meaning and that it is impossible for me just now to know it. . . . I can understand only in human terms . . . And these two certainties — my appetite for the absolute and for unity and the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle — I also know that I cannot reconcile them.³

It is important to notice in Camus's writings that the real problem concerning the incomprehensible nature of the world is always the problem of the power of evil in the world. The major themes in *The Plague*, *The Fall*, and *The Stranger*, as well as in his drama, all deal with the reality and inscrutability of evil. Camus never deals with the problem of goodness in the universe. Why are there goodness and compassion in human life? We will delay the question raised by Ca-

² Ibid., 21.

³ Ibid., 38.

mus's lack of concern with the problem of goodness for the time being. But we call attention to it at this point in connection with the Absurd. I submit that it is not "the world" which is incomprehensible to Camus. It is the power of evil in the world which defies comprehension.

Let us summarize: Camus posits the Absurd as the foundation for his world-view. The Absurd is the confrontation of man, who is compelled to try to understand the unity and whole of life, and the world, which defies the very comprehension which man compulsively seeks. I believe that the word "meaning" can be substituted for Camus's word "comprehension." Camus does not want mere analysis of the world. He wants a rational explanation of the meaning of the scheme of things, the whole of the economy of the universe. Man confronts the world with a yearning for meaning. This yearning is one pole of the Absurd.

At the opposite pole of the Absurd is what Camus calls "the world." The world is not the material universe, Nature, but human life in the world. Specifically, Camus asks why there is evil in human life. Thus, the Absurd, which is the foundation of Camus's world-view, is the name given to the confrontation of man seeking the meaning of life and, specifically, seeking to comprehend how life can have meaning in the face of overwhelming evil and certain death. Life is never really understood and evil is never overcome. The reader can scarcely escape comparisons at this point with the problem of ancient Job. But unlike the writer of Job, Camus refuses to allow a resolution.

With the construction of the Absurd as a foundation solidly in place, Camus builds upon it each of his literary works. Camus denied that he was a philosopher. It is often stated that he had "no system, no general framework, and no philosophy." That assertion should not go unchallenged. Camus never altered his basic philosophical construction of the Absurd. He wrote from within the confines of this system, denying ultimate reality to any answer which offered a resolution of the Absurd tension.

For example, suicide is seriously considered in *The Myth of Sisyphus* but dismissed as a resolution. To die would relieve the tension of one of the essential poles of the Absurd. Without the man himself, the confronter, there could be no confrontation and the Absurd would no longer exist. Similarly, the possibility of a good God is not possible within the Absurd philosophy because He would be the ultimate resolution of meaning, the opposite pole of the Absurd construct. Human life faced off against ultimate meaning is the Absurd. I submit that, while Camus is excruciatingly honest in his observation and experience of life, he does not consciously twist his reality to fit his philosophy. The Absurd is always the measure and test of reality. If one is "lucid"

as he views life, he understands that the ultimate human condition is the Absurd. Those who do not accept the human situation as Absurd lack lucidity. Thus Camus appears to leave room for an explanation of the life/meaning confrontation as something other than Absurd. But none of Camus's works exhibits his serious consideration of alternatives to the Absurd. It becomes progressively difficult in Camus's works to discern the line between reality, which is always Absurd, and the Absurd itself, which determines Camus's reality. Camus's system is not as open-ended as some have insisted.

With the formula of the Absurd as a pattern, Camus shaped his literary work and his view of reality. *The Plague* is unquestionably Camus's best literary work and his most complete novelistic statement. In *The Plague* Camus rings all the changes on the Absurd. The incomprehensible evil is cast in the form of the bubonic plague which strikes the city of Oran. The courageous imperceptives are the heroic Dr. Rieux and his alter ego Tarrou. The plague does not yield any answer or cure to their heroic efforts. But the struggle against the plague continues in spite of there being no visible success.

The framework of the Absurd is clearly visible in *The Plague*. If either the disease or the combatants were to yield, the tension would be lost and the Absurd would collapse. In Camus's literary work there is always this scheme. The titles of his two "philosophical" works, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*, are indicative of their contents. The rock is to be smilingly pushed back to the top of the mountain, and life is to be lived in rebellion against the oppressive powers of life. The only variation between *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus's earlier work, and *The Rebel*, which came later, was in the matter of "measure." Camus modified his earlier insistence on revolt to speak of rebellion as constructive and creative. One must not merely strike out against the world blindly but must find creative ways in which rebellion will be useful to other people. *The Stranger* is representative of Camus's earlier view and *The Plague*, his moderated stance.

We now see at least one of the reasons for Camus's rejection of religion as "the answer." The Judeo-Christian religion accepts the reality of a transcendent power in the person of God, a resolution to the tension of the Absurd. What Camus attempts to do is to define value and virtue without reference to a divine presence in the world.

"It comes to this," Tarrou said almost casually; "what interests me is learning how to become a saint."

"But you don't believe in God."

"Exactly! Can one be a saint without God? — that's the problem, in fact the only problem, I'm up against today."⁴

Can virtue and goodness be validated simply on their own intrinsic worth without reference to any divine revelation? It is precisely at this point that Camus arbitrarily grants value, aside from any rational explanation, to all who "strive their utmost to be healers."⁵

Camus inserts into his system the basic Judeo-Christian ethic of loving one's neighbor, thinking he has severed human compassion from any divine source. He endeavors to replace the religious orientation which identifies God as the source of love with a purely humanistic value system, declaring that we ought to love each other simply because of our inherent value as humans. Drawing upon the most primitive Judeo-Christian code of ethics, Camus ultimately concludes that the traditionally Christian values are valid but that they can operate apart from any creation/revelation by Deity.

It is extremely unfortunate that Camus was so ill-verses in a serious understanding of Christian doctrine or Biblical theology. Camus's image of God was that of his childhood — a God who resides in "heaven where He sits in silence." Camus's simplistic concept of God is expressed by Dr. Rieux in *The Plague*, when he says that "if he believed in an all-powerful God he would cease curing the sick and leave that to Him."⁶ For Camus, God's presence in the universe must be accompanied by the cessation of suffering, evil, and death, the visible, rational evidence of God's present action.

It is impossible to imagine that Camus knew nothing of the Christian concept of God as Emmanuel, with us. There are some apparent reasons for Camus's total silence concerning the concept of the God who suffers with us. It is entirely possible that Camus was not capable of accepting the Christian view of the incarnate God in Jesus Christ simply because such acceptance would have totally revolutionized his insistence on the Absurd as the only lucid world-view.

Further, the Church, said Camus, exhibits much more interest in abstractions about faith and compassion than in involvement with the suffering people of this world. The apparent indifference of the people who claimed faith in God undoubtedly colored Camus's thinking. The silence of the Roman Catholic Church in particular and all Christendom in general during the years of Hitler's atrocities in Europe seemed

⁴ Albert Camus, *The Plague*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Random House, 1948) 230-31.

⁵ Ibid., 278.

⁶ Ibid., 116.

to Camus to exemplify the aloofness of Christians to the realities of human life. In addressing a group of Dominican monks in 1948, Camus voiced some of his bitterness concerning the soft-spoken, ineffective way in which the Church had claimed to condemn fascism.

For a long time during those frightful years I waited for a great voice to speak up in Rome . . . For I knew that the spirit would be lost if it did not utter a cry of condemnation when faced with force. It seems that that voice did speak up. But I assure you that millions of men like me did not hear it . . . What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out, loud and clear, that never a doubt, never the slightest doubt, could rise in the heart of the simplest man. That they should get away from abstraction and confront the blood-stained face history has taken on today.⁷

It is intriguing to consider what Camus's attitude toward the Christian faith might have been, whether or not he would have taken a different view of God, had Christians spoken up "loud and clear" in the face of Europe's holocaust.

Camus carried on a dialogue with Christians throughout his life, softening his more harsh indictments against Christianity in the latter years of his life. Some have suggested that before he died Camus was approaching the borderline where he would cross over from compassionate humanism to some sort of orthodox Christian faith. He personally denied that this was so. His cordial dialogue with Christians notwithstanding, Camus never got past the impasse of Christian faith as an escape from reality.

The struggle is eluded. Man integrates the absurd and in that communion causes to disappear its essential character, which is opposition, laceration, and divorce. The leap is an escape.⁸

But Camus does, in fact, perform an act of immense faith. Apart from reference to God, Camus inserts into his Absurd system certain ultimate values. These God-like but God-less values include the value of human life, compassion for the suffering masses of people, evil which is discerned as that which oppresses human life, and creative rebellion against the world and the systems which inflict suffering, to name but a few. Camus rejects the revealed values claimed by Christian theology and replaces those values with a sensitive, humanistic code.

⁷ Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961) 71.

⁸ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, 26.

Camus seems to develop a perspective that is negatively molded by Christian theology in the sense that he consciously and in a way systematically enunciates specific “doctrines” that have prior Christian counterparts and opposite numbers.⁹

The very process by which Camus constructs his system of humanistic “doctrine” requires a “givenness” of certain values, the counterpart of Christian revelation. Camus simply posits that it is right for men to be compassionate. Since for him there is no revelation against which one may test the origin or ultimate truth of value, one simply asserts that this is so. Camus offers no apologetic, avoiding any “abstractions.” As it turns out, Camus’s value system and “doctrine” run closely parallel to Biblical ethics. Woelfel notes sixteen parallel points in comparing Camus’s set of values and their Biblical counterparts.¹⁰ Denying a belief in divine revelation, Camus nonetheless outlines his values after the Judeo-Christian system. Even for the modern agnostic, then, the heritage of our Judeo-Christian tradition in the West comes seeping back to the surface when men seek most diligently for meaning in life.

However, everything Camus advocates as good in human life can be facilitated within the Absurd only so long as he denies the source of divine revelation. Recognition of divine revelation would not fit in the Absurd construct. Camus would say, for example, the human solidarity is good because he has discovered it to be so. But this circular argument does not really resolve the question “Why?” Why is brotherhood better than estrangement? Why should we treat our fellow men with compassionate concern? The Christian replies that ultimately it is because the God of the universe has created us and because He has revealed Himself in love. Camus would like to have the answer grounded only in human experience. He asserts that we are able to cut off the roots of our religion and retain the values given us by that religion.

As I have already suggested, Camus never took the last step which would have put him within the pale of the Christian faith. But he obviously borrowed heavily from the ancient teaching of the Gospel, attributing his source as human rather than divine.

There is another gap in Camus’s system. In order for the Absurd to exist, there must be order in the universe. Camus does not suggest that the universe is chaos. What he disclaims is the possibility of comprehending the order of existence. To reject the order of things would destroy one pole of the Absurd. Camus’s Absurd can exist only as long

⁹ James W. Woelfel, *Camus: A Theological Perspective* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1975) 36.

¹⁰ Ibid., 37.

as a person faces the order of the world but does not comprehend it. The gap which I refer to occurs when one presses the question of how or why such order exists. Camus's Caligula is the nihilist who denies order. But Caligula does not speak for Camus. Camus's only response to the question concerning order would have to be that he simply does not know.

Ultimately, then, we begin to see that Camus is quite selective in asking the questions he wants to ask and rejecting the answers which would disturb the fragile tension of the Absurd. He traces nothing to the source which, for him, would be an abstraction. But he does not hesitate to be very insistent that the values he posits are true, even though he does not know why. I do not believe that Camus was quite as open to the truth and to new light as he would have had us believe. It does not seem qualitatively different to posit certain values as Camus does without any rationale except his own convictions and to claim, as Christians do, that there is a Source from which the truth comes. There is no final and irrefutable case which can be built for either side of the argument. The Christian says in faith that the truth has been revealed. The humanist says that we can live by human values without reference to God or revelation. But history has shown us in the West that humanism without any divine point of reference can readily become a Siberia or a gas chamber.

Camus's gifts to Christians are these: a magnificent literary talent, a depth of sensitivity to human suffering, a dogmatic belief that human beings must not yield to the power of evil, and a sense of the solidarity of all mankind.

The Nobel Prize citation given Albert Camus in 1957 said in part that he illuminated "the problems of the human conscience in our time."

Camus died January 5, 1960, in an automobile accident near Paris. The car in which he was riding skidded and drove into a tree. Albert Camus died instantly. He was forty-six years old.

Adam and the Tragic Perspective in *Paradise Lost*

by Barbara E. Hamm

By the time Adam makes his first appearance in Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, Milton has already set the stage for the drama that is to follow, the drama of the temptation and fall of man. The reader has already been apprised of the nature of the heroic and comic perspectives, the differing points of view of Satan and God, respectively.¹¹ Satan's values are those of the old heroic code—hatred, rebellion, the pursuit of revenge, and the glory to be derived from the defeat of one's enemy. Satan has chosen to defy God, and, having failed in direct confrontation with the Almighty, seeks revenge by a more devious course, one which entails designs upon the newly created inhabitants of earth. He is committed to the pursuit of evil, almost as if in ironic imitation of the providential order of God, which is committed to the turning of evil into good. From the divine perspective, which comprehends all time and space, Satan's efforts are seen to be ultimately of no avail. God's perspective is comic,¹² envisioning harmony, wholeness, and the final restoration of that order his adversary has broken. But that restoration does not occur within the poem's time; it is predicted, not portrayed. By the time Adam emerges upon the scene, the battle lines have been firmly drawn between Satan and God. Their warfare is eternal, and its focus, moreover, is declared to be Man. Adam is the target for the opposing forces in the conflict between good and evil. The first three books establish the supernatural conflict as the setting within which the human participants choose, act, and suffer.

¹¹ These perspectives are explored in detail in my Kansas State University dissertation, "Multiple Perspectives in *Paradise Lost*: A Generic Approach."

¹² I employ the term as it is used in Renaissance critical theory. Stated simply, it means that everything turns out all right. Thomas Heywood writes that "comedies begin in trouble and end in peace" ("An Apology for Actors," in *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden*, ed. Allan H. Gilbert [New York: American Book Co., 1940] 555). It is in this sense that Dante's great poem is to be regarded as a comedy and that some critics have even considered *Paradise Lost* a comic poem.

And it is the nature of their choice, their act, and their consequent suffering, that Milton is concerned to present. Adam and Eve and their welfare (and that of their descendants) are always of central concern in the poem, even when the human pair are not the dramatic center of the action. E. M. W. Tillyard notes that "the various travels from Hell and Heaven converge in Adam's garden,"¹³ while John Steadman observes that "both divine and infernal strategies are directed specifically towards man. Earth occupies the central position in Milton's cosmos, and the central figures are neither God nor Satan, but Adam and Eve. The basic ethical concerns of the poem are the nature, duties and end of man."¹⁴ A similar emphasis is made by William Riggs, who states that "Milton repeatedly exploits cosmic polarity to project on a grand scale the predicament of man and the choices available to him."¹⁵

For Adam clearly has a choice, as his long conversation with Raphael during the middle books of the poem shows. His fate is not determined, as God makes clear in Book III. His perspective, and by extension that of all mankind according to Milton, does not become tragic until the moment of the Fall, the event which functions as the fulcrum of the poem. In *Paradise Lost* we see the sequence of events before the Fall and the prospect of human history leading away from it, a prospect signaled by the narrator and acknowledged by Adam as tragic. Having recounted for us the congenial interchange between Adam and Raphael, the narrator says, only a few lines into Book IX, in which the Fall occurs: "I now must change/ Those Notes to Tragic."¹⁶ He prepares us for the "fatal Trespass" (IX.889) as Eve plucks the forbidden fruit from off the tree. She eats, and Adam seconds her folly. From then on the pair are judged and begin to experience the consequences of their choice. They become fit prey for Sin and Death, who now have easy access to earth and its inhabitants. Having repented, Adam and Eve find comfort from despair; yet to Adam is revealed the future course of human history as it has been determined by his violation. Suffering, sin, and finally death will overtake him and all his descendants. Nevertheless, God has provided a remedy which will one day issue in defeat for the evil one and triumph for the faithful. This end, however, will be achieved by few and only by the practice of heroic virtue in the face of hostility and difficult circumstances.

¹³ E. M. W. Tillyard, *The English Epic and its Background* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954) 35.

¹⁴ John M. Steadman, *Milton and the Renaissance Hero* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967) 192.

¹⁵ William G. Riggs, *The Christian Poet in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972) 44.

¹⁶ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IX.5-6. Citations from the poem in my text are to *John Milton: Paradise Lost*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, Odyssey Press, 1935).

Such, in slender summary, is the progress of events following the tragic choice of our first parents. Adam as a tragic figure questions the nature and order of the universe only to have that order, and his place in it, more firmly re-established by his very questioning.¹⁷ In addition, as Herbert Weisinger points out,

the protagonist must be free to choose: Oedipus must be free to choose between the demands of his own reason and those of the gods; Hamlet must be free to choose between taking justice into his own hands, thereby partaking of the very evil which he wishes to expunge and God's own way of establishing justice; Adam must be free to choose between his own will and that of God.¹⁸

Adam's freedom to choose is underscored at several points in the poem, first of all by God, who says of man: "I made him just and right,/ Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (III.98-99). Raphael repeatedly warns Adam that he, like the angels, maintains his happy state by his obedience(V.496-503, 519-37; VIII.633-43) and that even now an enemy waits to bereave him of this happy state in revenge against the Almighty (VI.893-912).

Adam, then, must be free to choose wrongly, though he is not then free to deny or obviate the consequences of his choice, a choice which entails upon him and his heirs suffering, evil, and death. The consequences, other than those which Adam directly experiences, are revealed to him by the angel Michael in Books XI and XII, after which ensues Adam's great encomium upon the necessity for obedience to God and reliance upon His providence. "Henceforth I learn" (XII.561), says Adam, fulfilling the requirement that the tragic figure recognize his action for what it was and that he gain a new understanding and perception of his place in the scheme of things. This Adam has done. His questioning of the moral order, his mistaken choice, and his new understanding of the order whose validity he questioned, describe the cycle of "Purpose, Passion (or Suffering) and Perception" which constitutes, according to Francis Fergusson, the "tragic rhythm of action."¹⁹ Adam's place among tragic figures is firmly established by

¹⁷ See Richard B. Sewall's "The Tragic Form," *Essays in Criticism*, 4 (1954), reprinted in *Tragedy: Plays, Theory, and Criticism*, ed. Richard Levin (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1960) 173-80.

¹⁸ Herbert Weisinger, *Tragedy and the Paradox of the Fortunate Fall* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State College Press, 1953) 268.

¹⁹ Francis Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1949) 18.

his heightened understanding and by his "sense of assurance, achieved through suffering, of rational order" (Weisinger, p. 266).

This assurance of rational order, which for Milton is synonymous with God's providence, is not, however, the main emphasis of his argument. That such an assurance is necessary in order to be consistent with Christian orthodoxy is perfectly true. And that such an assurance is necessary to relieve Adam and Eve from utter despair is clearly depicted in Book X, where we see Adam outstretched on the ground, cursing his creation and wishing for death, and Eve suggesting either that they prevent the development of the human race altogether or that they actually seek death by their own hands. This same assurance is possible because of the divine perspective, God's overriding vision which sees all things as contributing to the good which His providence continually enacts. But it is not paramount in the poem. Milton is here emphasizing paradise lost, not regained. The centrality of the Fall and its tragic consequences to Milton's argument is Steadman's reason for calling *Paradise Lost* a tragedy.²⁰ Dennis Burden regards the Fall as "a model Christian tragedy" and further maintains that "besides being tragic in itself, it also made all other tragedy possible since its outcome brought sin and death into the world. Adam and Eve look to a tragic future."²¹ And in what is probably one of the most important critical works of the twentieth century, Northrop Frye points out that "*Paradise Lost* is not simply an attempt to write one more tragedy, but to expound what Milton believed to be the archetypal myth of tragedy."²²

Having delineated in very general terms Adam's progress as a tragic hero, I should like to examine in greater detail the process by which he acquires his tragic perspective. For, unlike the perspectives of Satan and God, which are shown to be unalterably fixed and diametrically opposed from the very first, Adam's perspective is acquired.²³ It is Milton's purpose to show how man realized his tragic lot. In so doing Milton portrays both this and the far side of innocence, both the world of sorrow and woe as we now know it and the far different world that obtained before man spoiled it with his folly. Such a format might seem at first glance to indicate the showering of recriminations on

²⁰ John M. Steadman, "Milton and Mazzoni: The Genre of the Divine Commedia," *HLQ* 23 (1960) 120-121.

²¹ Dennis H. Burden, *The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967) 180, 181.

²² Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (1957; rpt. New York: Atheneum, 1967) 211.

²³ Satan's choice is depicted in Books V and VI in the description of the War in Heaven, but in the framework of the poem it is narrated as past history by the angel Raphael to Adam.

Adam's head as the primary purpose. Such, however, I do not believe to be the case. To show man's tragic lot and curse the lack of possible redress would be fruitless. And Milton has a salutary purpose, the implications of which we will be considering. But to achieve that salutary purpose required that Milton show man's happy state before the Fall as well as his tragic state afterwards.

Adam and Eve appear in the morning of the world, crowned with perfection and armed with innocence, speaking in magisterial tones appropriate to the parents of the race, the archetypes of graceful masculinity and feminine loveliness. We experience with them the freshness and joy of their "happy rural seat of various view" (IV.247). The picture is a set piece, surpassing all those fabled fields and gardens of antique lore; it is the paradigm of pastoral, the ceremony of innocence. Nor are the latter contradictory, for in Milton's pastoral, simplicity and ritual cohere.²⁴ Eden is not a backwoods pasture nor Adam and Eve rustic bumpkins. Naked they walk through the paths of Paradise, august and stately, adoring their Maker and praising His goodness.

But they also have work to do. They must prune and trim flowers and bushes, clear paths, and care for the abundance entrusted to them. While it is sometimes objected that their work is scarcely demanding, Adam is heard to say they can hardly keep with it all (IV.623-29). And of course work in Paradise does not carry the objectionable connotations that many of us (as fallen creatures) may attach to the concept. Such connotations come with the Fall. Adam's chores are delightful, a source of pleasure, yet they do demand effort.

Nor is Adam's nature, though perfect, secure from assault. It is as perfect as the human mold can contain,²⁵ but it is not the perfection of absoluteness, like that of God, complete unto itself. Adam's happiness is a gift from God, but its continuance is his own responsibility. Adam has free will. His nature has been made perfect but not immutable; he is free either to follow the single command of God or to disobey. But choosing the latter, he is not then free to disavow the consequences. And it is to make clear the consequences of such disobedience that Raphael relates to Adam the battle in Heaven and instructs him in the nature of the eternal warfare between Satan and God. For Adam as yet has the choice between following Satan and following God. His perspective is not yet determined. Between the extremes of the infer-

²⁴ See C. S. Lewis' *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942; Galaxy Book ed. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), Chap. VII, "The Style of Secondary Epic," 40-51, and Chap. VIII, "Defence of this Style," 52-61.

²⁵ See III.93-128; V.520-37; VIII.640-43.

nal and the divine range the possibilities for the creature. To the degree that he affirms the divine and embraces the moral imperative of obedience, to that degree he renounces the infernal and participates in its destruction. To that degree he participates, insofar as he is able, in the vision of God and the enactment of good.

For Adam to do so requires not only his understanding and assent but his vigilance. Raphael's account of Satan's fall and purposed revenge serves to warn the human pair of the enemy who would ruin them. The state of innocence is not at all, as Anne Ferry claims, "untroubled and unchanging."²⁶ Milton's Eden, as Riggs reminds us, has a "conditional innocence,"²⁷ and it is not without effort that Adam and Eve maintain their happy state. They must be on constant guard against the enemy; enemies do not exist in worlds that are "untroubled and unchanging." Paradise is not insulated from tension or trial, as Adam and Eve are to learn, and it is highly significant that our very first glimpse of it (in Book IV) is conveyed through the eyes of Satan. The possibility of evil is present from the beginning, a possibility which illustrates Isabel MacCaffrey's statement that "struggle, temptation, resistance, were everywhere, imbedded in the very structures of macrocosm and microcosm."²⁸ It is within this state of affairs that Adam and Eve are charged with the same responsibility that they have *after* the Fall—to affirm goodness and defeat the powers of darkness by loving and obeying God. What changes after the Fall is not their responsibility but the much more difficult circumstances under which it will henceforth be carried out. As Barbara Lewalski explains in her excellent article on the subject,

Milton's vision of the prelapsarian life admits no dichotomy between the states of Innocence and Experience. . . . This imagination of the Life in Innocence is emphatically antiromantic, anti-Arcadian, anti-escapist, anti-individualistic: it is an exaltation of humanism, maturity, civilization, in happiest conjunction with vitality, change, growth. Such an imagination of the State of Innocence sets the Fall in the proper tragic perspective in the poem, as the event which blasted man's opportunity to develop—without

²⁶ Anne Davidson Ferry, *Milton's Epic Voice: The Narrator in Paradise Lost* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1967) 81.

²⁷ Riggs, *The Christian Poet in Paradise Lost*, 49.

²⁸ Isabel MacCaffrey, *Paradise Lost as "Myth"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959) 166.

suffering, violence, despair and death, though not in the least without tension and trial—the rich resources and large potentialities of the human spirit.²⁹

Sin, sorrow and death all make their appearance in the aftermath of the Fall. Adam enters a tragic future in which these harsh realities narrow and constrict the range of possibilities that he formerly enjoyed. The tragic shape of the world he creates determines the way he now must view reality. His becomes the tragic perspective. The shape of history, as revealed to Adam in Books XI and XII (and as known by the reader), conforms to the tragic process inaugurated by Adam and Eve.

And for this inauguration, which occurs in Book IX, Milton does not leave the reader unprepared. Foreshadowings of Adam's tragic choice occur throughout the eight preceding books. Now careful explanation is here in order. To say that Milton employs dramatic foreshadowing is not to say that Adam was bound to fall, that he was chained by necessity to a predetermined course. Dramatic foreshadowing is not theological foreshadowing, if I may be permitted such a term. Milton is embodying traditional Christian story in poetic form, his artistic representation occurring after the fact. He must play off in his poem the two seemingly contradictory factors of the reader's knowledge and experience of the fact of Adam's tragic choice against the undetermined character of that choice *before* the fact. He must prepare the reader dramatically for that against which every precaution was taken. With this understanding in hand we can see, in light of the outcome, a pattern of events, situations, speeches, that acquire added meaning; the tragic perspective intrudes itself many times in the poem before the tragic choice actually occurs.

That Adam will make such a choice is directly stated by both the narrator and God and chillingly intimated by Satan. The narrator's announcement of the argument of the poem, occurring in the very first line, concerns "Man's First Disobedience." Later on in Book I the reader encounters the description of the false gods of Old Testament times as the rebel angels of Satan's host set free (by what event?) to wander upon the face of the earth. In Book II he hears the rebels plotting their villainous revenge, aimed at man. It is when he hears Satan's

²⁹ Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, "Innocence and Experience in Milton's *Eden*," in *New Essays on Paradise Lost*, ed. Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1969) 116-17.

prediction of the benefits of success to his paramour and progeny, Sin and Death (II.839-44), that the reader is brought up short with the recognition of himself as Death's prey, of himself as a possible object to satisfy the ravenous hunger of that fierce maw.

The tragic perspective is again clearly set forth in Book III (II.80-134) when God plainly indicates that Satan will succeed in his dire attempt. The reader for a time is allowed the perspective of God, who perceives all things as immediately before Him. Satan's success is alluded to numerous times in Book IV, beginning with the narrator's opening call for a warning voice to help our first parents escape the "mortal snare" (IV.8) of their foe. Satan is called "The Tempter ere th' Accuser of man-kind" (IV.10) and boasts that man and earth ere long shall know his reign as well as that of Heaven's King (IV.110-13). The portrayal of Satan as a prowling wolf (IV.183-87), as a grand thief entering God's fold (IV.188-92), and as a cormorant sitting on the tree of life devising death (IV.194-98), bodes no good for his purposed quarry. And it is from this latter vantage point that we, through Satan's eyes, first view the loveliness of Paradise. Satan's sardonic speech (IV.358-92) is replete with irony at the intended evil he proposes. The mock ceremony is almost unbearable as he offers his sinister pity for man's approaching change and for his new dwelling, which may not please like Paradise. Not for nothing is Adam warned of the subtlety and malice of his foe. Satan, perceiving the condition of the happy state of Adam and Eve, which was the same as his own—obedience—devises their destruction after the same pattern as his own. He will seduce them to forsake their place in God's order, and bids them, with a grim pun, to enjoy "Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed" (IV.535).

Numerous foreshadowings of the fatal act occur throughout Books V to VIII. At the beginning of Book V Eve relates her untoward dream, in which she sees her guide eat of the interdicted tree. The foreshadowing even includes the verbal construction, though as with all foreshadowings, this is not apparent until the event foreshadowed. Of the one whose steps she followed, Eve says "He pluckt, he tasted" (V.65), a formula tragically repeated in the description of Eve's own later trespass when "she pluck'd, she eat" (IX.781). Her response even in her dream is the same as Adam's to her fall: "mee damp horror chill'd" (V.65), Eve relates to her husband, who later, hearing of Eve's act, "Astonied stood and Blank, while horrow chill/ Ran through his veins" (IX.890-91).

In his long conversation with Raphael, Adam is repeatedly warned, both directly and by the narrative example of the fallen angel and his hosts, of the conditions under which he and Eve maintain their happiness. He is reminded that their happiness is directly related to their

obedience, that an enemy is plotting their ruin, and that the reward of disobedience is misery and death—reminders which would be unnecessary in the absence of real danger. In Book VIII the reader learns along with Raphael that it is possible for Adam to be moved in the wrong direction by Eve's beauty and yield to it his power of judgment. Upon hearing this, Raphael lectures Adam on the difference between passion and love and departs with a final admonition to heed God's command, to exercise good judgment, and to repel all temptation to transgress.

The effect of the foreshadowings and the repeated warnings and admonitions has been to prepare the reader for the emergence of the tragic perspective, intimations of which have exerted increasing pressure as the narrative progresses. Even after the narrator informs us in the opening lines of Book IX that his tale must take a tragic turn, the actual moment of choice is delayed as the wily serpent accosts his unsuspecting victim. Suspense mounts as he employs his subtle machinations against Eve, appealing to her in terms clearly reminiscent of his own fall.³⁰ He appeals first to her beauty, declaring that it entitles her to be a goddess. He tempts her to reach beyond her own place within God's order of creation and excites her desire to be as gods, knowing both good and evil. Appealing to Eve in terms of the biblical formula of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, he commands to her the fruit of fairest colors and most savory odor and entreats her to partake of that which he claims has magical power to confer godhead upon her. Taken in by his guileful words, our credulous mother succumbs to the blandishments of the tempter. The climax, so long suspended, is short and direct:

Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she eat:
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,
That all was lost.

(IX.781-84)

Eve's guilt and the results of her crime are immediately apparent. Oblivious to her condition, not knowing she eats death even as she gorges herself on the fruit, Eve entertains thoughts of godhead as well as the desire for mastery over Adam. Then, fearing that God might really have seen and death ensue, despite the serpent's assurance to the contrary, she resolves to second the crime upon Adam, to prevent

³⁰ The suspense in this case does not involve the outcome, as the reader already knows what that must be; rather, it involves the dramatic means by which the poet brings it about.

any possibility of his being wedded to another Eve in her place. Thus lies, treachery, fear, and deceit are the immediate results of her fall—this the knowledge she so coveted, this the godhead she desired.

Adam's motive, though considered exemplary by many critics, is that of choosing the creature over the creator. He is not deceived, "But fondly overcome with Female charm" (IX.999). He knows he chooses wrongly, but does so for the natural bond between Eve and himself, "Submitting to what seem'd remediless" (IX.919). And here the narrator only hints at the possibility of a remedy, only suggests that Adam might still have avoided the completion of the fatal act and perhaps been a means towards Eve's redemption. We do not know because Adam foregoes that choice and against his better knowledge completes the crime, embraces mortality, and entails sorrow and woe upon himself and all his heirs. To this the bond of nature draws him. For this he casts aside his innocence and surrenders his judgment. With this he engenders folly, corruption, disharmony, and death, and creates for himself a tragic world. Repeating what is undoubtedly one of the supreme examples of the pathetic fallacy, the narrator, recounting Adam's eating of the fruit from the hand of his wife, observes

Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,
Sky low'r'd, and muttering Thunder, some sad drops
Wept at completing of the mortal Sin
Original.

(IX.1000-04)

Adam's reaction is scarcely more commendable than Eve's. Both of them eat their fill, intoxicated as with new wine, and fancy they feel divinity sprouting within them. The reality is far otherwise. The pair look on each other with lascivious eyes, and for the first time in Paradise their lovemaking is less than wholesome. They become mere objects for the satisfaction of desire, and the account of their sporting suggests rapacity. Having exhausted themselves with their amorous play, they sleep, and awakening, feel the enormity of their loss:

up they rose
As from unrest, and each the other viewing,
Soon found thir Eyes how op'n'd, and thir minds
How dark'n'd; innocence, that as a veil
Had shadow'd them from knowing ill, was gone,
Just confidence, and native righteousness,
And honour from about them, naked left
To guilty shame.

(IX.1051-58)

It is to this their eyes are opened, to the knowledge of their guilt, their shame and desolation. Adam, recognizing what it is they have really acquired, voices his despair:

our Eyes

Op'n'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both Good and Evil, Good lost, and Evil got,
Bad Fruit of Knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of Honour void,
Of Innocence, of Faith, of Purity,
Our wonted Ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our Faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence: whence evil store;
Even shame, the last of evils; of the first
Be sure then.

(IX.1070-80)

His first thought is to hide from God and then to cover their nakedness, shameful now once evil blights their innocence. Torn by passions they have never known before, of anger, hate, suspicion, and distrust, they fall into mutual recriminations, neither accepting any blame for himself. Fine fruit of the divinity they fancied. Their eyes are truly opened, on themselves and on a world soon infected by the forces they unleash.

The powers newly acquired by those forces, Sin and Death, are clearly delineated in Book X. Persuaded by some secret sympathy that Satan has indeed achieved his goal, Sin urges Death to help her build a path "from Hell to that new World/ Where Satan now prevails" (X.257-58). For now the devils have free access to that world so late corrupted. Death's cooperation is dictated by the promise of sufficient prey on earth, made possible by Adam's transgression. Sin and Death meet Satan returning from his voyage, and with mutual congratulations they part, Satan creating them, his plenipotentiaries on earth with the mandate there to exercise dominion, chiefly on man, to enslave and finally destroy him. Exulting in anticipation of the exercise of their powers, Sin and Death arrive in Paradise. The reader is chilled by Sin's charge to Death:

Thou therefore on these Herbs, and Fruits, and Flow'rs
Feed first, on each Beast next, and Fish, and Fowl,
No homely morsels, and whatever thing
The Scythe of Time mows down, devour unspar'd,
Till I in Man residing through the Race,
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions all infect,
And season him thy last and sweetest prey.

(X.603-09)

This unholy trio regards Adam's fall as a major victory in the battle against God. As indeed it is. To be sure, it is a victory obtained indirectly, through God's creatures rather than against the Almighty Himself, but the taste of success is sweet. And the assurance of procuring large numbers of the human race to be their companions in Hell seems to them a guarantee of continued triumph, whatever consequences they personally must someday endure. For it is true that within God's good time, beyond time, Satan, Sin, and Death will all be ultimately vanquished, shut up forever in the domain that Satan boasts it is now his prerogative to enlarge. In addition, from God's perspective, Sin and Death function in God's providential order as necessary agents of cleansing and purification,

to lick up the draf^t and filth
Which man's polluting Sin with taint hath shed
On what was pure.

(X.630-32)

Having spoken of the renewal and cleansing of earth as belonging to some future time, God ends the speech from which the above passage is taken with these ominous words: "Till then the Curse pronounc't on both precedes" (X.640).

What that curse consists of is the burden of the rest of Book X and of Books XI and XII. Adam is to learn from Michael the full extent of the consequences of his crime, the effects of which begin to be immediately apparent. The reader has already observed its initial effects in the behavior of Adam and Eve towards each other. Animals begin to devour each other instead of herbs for food, and Adam watches an eagle driving his prey before him. Adam and Eve begin to feel inclemencies of weather, and Adam is concerned for some way to start a fire to provide warmth against the chill of the night. All these changes in nature are not lost on Adam, who remarks to Eve his speculation that "some furder change awaits us nigh" (XI.193) even as the angel Michael descends with his heavenly bands to escort the pair out of the garden. Before he does so, however, he grants to Adam a vision of human history. And just as Adam is instructed by the angel, so that history itself is a metaphor of divine instruction. That is, Michael tells Adam that death, to which he must finally be subjected, has by God's grace been delayed so that Adam will have time to repent, "And one bad act with many deeds well done/ May'st cover" (XI.256-57). Similarly, God says that man's life will be one of sharp tribulation, to give him the opportunity to exercise faith and good works so that he may

be prepared and refined for the second life that awaits him (XI.62-66). Human history itself thus becomes a process of education, a course of divine instruction within the economy of God's providence, leading to a state of final bliss.

The achievement of that state of bliss, is however, conditional. Just as the continuance of Adam's happy state in Paradise depended upon his obedience to God, so his entrance into a second life with its fruits of joy and eternal bliss depends upon his embracing the redemption offered by the promised deliverer and pursuing a life of faith augmented by good works (XII.425-27). The first option, Adam's innocent life in Paradise, has been canceled by his sin. Adam learns from Michael, both in vision and in story, what the conditions of his future existence will be. Nor are they innocuous or pleasant. Rather he learns that his act has wrought corruption and dissolution into the very fabric of nature, that brother will slay brother, that good men will be few and that tyranny will be rife, that foul passions will enslave where reason should liberate, that men will deface the image of their Maker in themselves, that justice, temperance, truth, and faith will be forgot, that the world will be malignant to good men, benign to bad, and that lastly it will be destroyed, and most of earth's inhabitants, by their own choice, fall final prey to Death and his grim jaws. Such is the tragic world that Adam and Eve both create and inherit. Such is the shape of history that Michael reveals to Adam.

Adam's perspective has thus become a tragic one. He laments not only the disaster he has brought upon himself, hard enough to bear, but that which he has entailed upon his descendants. He knows that, having their forebear to thank for all the ills to which they are subject, they will revile and curse him and that most will be casualties in the continuing warfare between the forces of good and evil. That such an outcome can only be regarded as tragic from man's point of view is the obvious implication of the narrator's comment about the tragic note he must now strike (IX.5-6). Among Adam's other emotions on the morning of his forced exit from Paradise is the sense of fear (XI.139), while Michael describes the human pair as "sad,/ With cause for evils past" (XII.603-04). Foremost is God's assessment, that Adam had been "Happier, had it suffic'd him to have known/ Good by itself, and Evil not at all" (XI.88-89).

But that it did not suffice is the subject of Milton's poem. That Adam was not content to obey God's command and participate in His creative goodness is the theme of Milton's song. "Good with bad/ Expect to hear" (XI.358-59), Michael tells him, "supernal Grace contending/ With sinfulness of Men" (XI.359-60). Now the good he speaks of is the promise of God's aid in the struggle for virtue, the

promise of the deliverer who will one day reclaim the faithful. For God has provided a remedy; redemption is to be a glorious triumph. Michael's revelation grants to Adam a momentary participation in the comic vision of God within which His creation is seen to move continuously towards its appointed goal of harmony and goodness. As Frye explains, the comic working of God's providence is the background action of the poem.³¹ To say that the comic point of view is not central in the poem is not to say that God and His providential order are not the central facts of the universe Milton portrays. They are. In Frye's words again, "from the point of view of Christianity . . . tragedy is an episode in that larger scheme of redemption and resurrection to which Dante gave the name of *commedia*. . . ."³² Furthermore, "the sense of tragedy as a prelude to comedy is hardly separable from anything explicitly Christian" (p. 66).

The poet's artistry, however, is focused not on the glories of Heaven but on man and his predicament. In the foreground stands Adam the man, undone, dispossessed of innocence and Paradise, disqualified from immortality. As Steadman observes, "just as Dante's poem is the epic comedy of the Christian church, Milton's heroic poem is its epic tragedy."³³ Tragedy, not bleak despair or unmitigated pessimism. Tragedy not unenlightened by a ray of hope. But tragedy nevertheless. For Adam must now descend the mount of speculation. He has been given insight into God's ultimate victory not in order to avoid the world's ills but the better to confront them. His place is now on the subjected plain, his lot to toil unremittingly for bread and to struggle for virtue in a world inimical to its pursuit. Like all tragic heroes, Adam has gained something from his suffering. He reaffirms that providential order he has so rashly questioned when he concludes:

Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
Of knowledge, what this Vessel can contain;
Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
And love with fear the only God, to walk
As in his presence, ever to observe
his providence, and on him sole depend,
Merciful over all his works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak

³¹ Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism*, 320.

³² Northrop Frye, "The Argument of Comedy," in *English Institute Essays: 1948*, ed. D. A. Robertson, Jr. (1949; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1965) 66.

³³ Steadman, *Milton and the Renaissance Hero*, 89.

Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory,
And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life;
Taught this by his example whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.

(XII.557-73)

Adam rejects his fatal act as rashness and folly while he outlines what is for fallen man in a tragic world the paradigm of true heroism—to love God and obey Him, to trust in His providence, to depend on His mercy, and to suffer for the sake of truth as fortitude to highest victory. The need for such heroism will be great. Whereas Adam before the Fall surveyed a world unalloyed with corruption and misery, he is now obliged to pursue his way through the trammels of guilt and shame, accompanied by remorse for evils past, yet comforted by the glimpse vouchsafed him into the vision of the divine. It is in a mood of mingled joy and sadness that our first parents take leave of Paradise. It is with a sense of both the providence of God and the isolation of their solitary way that they enter into a tragic world.

JONATHAN SWIFT'S COUNSEL TO A CLERGYMAN

by E. LeRoy Lawson

James Van Buren's reputation is that of a loved and respected eccentric. Devotees of literature are scarce among the essentially pragmatic ministers of his brotherhood, so a Bible-loving preacher who garnishes his homilies with an allusion to classical mythology or a quotation from Dostoevsky or Shakespeare quite naturally stands somewhat apart from his colleagues. Students of literature quickly recognize that Van Buren is not really unique, however. He descends from a long line of English literary divines, including such notables as John Donne, George Herbert, Jonathan Swift, and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Passion for written truth and beauty leads rather naturally to a career in literature and theology.

As a professor engaged in preparing young men and women for full-time Christian ministry, Dr. Van Buren has inspired in his students an appreciation for the Word of God and the words of men. Not that he has slighted the more traditional disciplines of theoretical and practical theology. He has not, as his bibliography testifies. But his love of literature and language has been infectious, and by challenging his students to consider the manifold uses of language and the larger questions raised by the world's great writers, he has led them to avoid the petty preoccupations that can so quickly corrupt preaching. He has taught them to find their way through the foggy swamps of theological speculation by the light of concrete, simple, and therefore understandable, words.

As I reflected on James Van Buren's years as an instructor of young preachers, I recalled a letter written two centuries ago by Jonathan Swift in which he briefly assumed the same role. "To a Young Gentleman Lately Enter'd into Holy Orders" was written by Swift during his tenure as Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin. The parallel between Swift's counsel and that frequently given in Van Buren's classroom makes a

review of the letter appropriate on this occasion. To read Swift's letter in conjunction with a reading of his poems, moreover, is to realize anew how much the literary use of language has in common with its uses for religious purposes.

Even a superficial reader of Swift's poems is impressed with their railery, parody and playfulness. Very quickly, however, the reader grasps the underlying sense of moral earnestness which motivates the poet. In many of his poems, Swift seems almost compulsively to plead for reform. He deliberately exchanges more traditional poetic diction and music for the more directly persuasive rhetoric of the pulpit.

My purpose in this essay is to introduce a comparison of Swift's homiletic and poetic principles. We shall compare his advice to the young clergyman with examples from his poems, to illustrate that in these instances, at least, Swift practiced as a poet what he preached as an instructor.

He begins with the purposes of preaching: "As I take it, the two principal branches of preaching are, first, to tell the people what is their duty, and then to convince them that it is so."³⁴ Communication of a truth and persuasion to dutiful action are the purposes. Then, in beautifully clear prose, Swift warns his reader to avoid obscure words, cliches, affectation, appeals to passion, reading his sermons, displays of wit and erudition, and other obstacles to persuasion. All but the last two injunctions named here he faithfully follows in his own poetry.

That Swift conceived his poems to have a moral purpose is clearly stated in "On the Death of Dr. Swift."

As for his works in verse and prose,
I am myself no judge of those:
Nor can I tell what critics thought 'em:
But this I know, all people bought 'em.
As with a moral view design'd
To cure the vices of mankind:
His vein, ironically grave,
Expos'd the fool, and lash'd the knave.³⁵

³⁴ Jonathan Swift, "A Letter to a Young Clergyman, Lately Entered into Holy Orders," *The Works of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Walter Scott (Edinburgh, 1814) 8, 345.

³⁵ Jonathan Swift, "On the Death of Dr. Swift," *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Padraic Colum (New York and London, 1967), lines 311-316. All poems are quoted from this selection by poem title and line numbers.

In commenting on Swift's earlier poetry, John Middleton Murry reaches this conclusion about its motivating purpose:

Two simple and fundamental emotions are incessantly bursting out; an intense admiration for moral beauty and an equally, or even more, intense detestation of a world which was incapable of responding to it. And, rightly or wrongly, Swift had persuaded himself that the excellence of poetry derived from the fidelity of its allegiance to the great and the good.³⁶

Although the poems of his early period are more "poetic" in terms of conventional technique than the simpler verses of his later years, according to Murry Swift does not lose his dedication to moral beauty. As in preaching, he feels compelled to "tell people what is their duty and then convince them that it is so."

In "To a Lady," Swift's best discussion of his poetry, the words echo the advice of the clergyman. The lady pleads for "some verses upon her in the Heroic Style." She alludes to his common practices in verse, asking that he less stubbornly resist accepted poetic practices and less severely criticize the objects of his satires:

Drop for once your constant rule,
Turning all to ridicule,
Teaching others how to ape you;
Court nor parliament can 'scape you;
Treat the public and your friends
Both alike, while neither mends.³⁷

But he cannot change his ways. He will not imitate her in refusing to face the truth:

You, like some acute philosopher,
Every fault have drawn a gloss over;
Placing in the strongest light
All your virtues to my sight.³⁸

He feels, as he says much later in the poem, that he must work for reformation:

Ridicule has greater power
To reform the world than sour.
Horses thus, let jockeys judge else,
Switches better guide then cudgels.
Bastings, heavy, dry, obtuse,
Only dulness can produce;

³⁶ Jonathan Swift: A Critical Biography (New York, 1955) 51.

³⁷ Lines 51-56.

³⁸ Lines 97-100.

While a little gentle jerking
Sets the spirits all a-working
Thus, I find it by experiment,
Scolding moves you less than merriment.³⁹

Ridicule, jerking, merriment—to communicate and persuade. The purposes of preaching and his poetry are one.

From his poems it is obvious that Swift chose to avoid the accepted and conventional. He saw himself as a poet outside the fellowship of poets much as he was a clergyman who would not be compared with other clerics. A reforming poet could be no more a conforming one than a reforming clergyman could be like all other men of the cloth:

A clergyman of special note
For shunning those of his own coat.⁴⁰

Throughout "A Letter to a Young Clergyman" Swift appeals to the young man not to follow the practices of his colleagues. He undoubtedly would have given the same advice to a young poet, because the specific instructions he gives the young clergyman he follows himself: he avoids obscurity, cliches, affectation and appeals to passion.

His poems are nothing if not clear. He carefully selects his words for clarity of expression to parallel the clearness of his insight and to force his reader to undeceive himself: "He could not abide man's egregious vanity and penchant for self-deception, which was one reason why he was so relentlessly realistic, so insistent on remaining undeluded."⁴¹ He wrote to the young minister,

And I defy the greatest divine to produce any law either of God or man, which obliges me to comprehend the meaning of *omniscience*, *omnipresence*, *ubiquity*, *beatific vision*, with a thousand others so frequent in pulpits, any more than that of *eccentric*, *idiosyncracy*, *entity*, and the like.⁴²

He firmly believed that anything worth saying should be so spoken that the "meanest" member of the audience could understand. Poetry should be equally clear and concrete, obviously pointing to the true:

These are the goddesses enroll'd
In Curril's collection, new and old,
Whose scoundrel fathers would not know 'em,

³⁹ Lines 212-221.

⁴⁰ "Addressed to the Earl of Oxford, Prime Minister of England," lines 27-28.

⁴¹ C. N. Stavron, "The Love Songs of J. Swift, G. Bernard Shaw, and J. A. A. Joyce," *MQ* 2 (1965) 136.

⁴² "Letter," 339.

If they should meet them in a poem.
True poets can depress and raise,
Are lords of infamy and praise;
They are not scurrilous in satire,
Nor will in panegyric flatter.
Unjustly poets we asperse;
Truth shines the brighter clad in verse,
And all the fictions they pursue
Do but insinuate what is true.⁴³

His meaning, like his language, is clear. The true poet seeks to express the truth in words which do not distort.

To clarity the clergyman will add freshness of language, which he achieves by avoiding the trite cliches: "Two things I will just warn you against: the first is, the frequency of flat unnecessary epithets; and the other is the folly of using old threadbare phrases..."⁴⁴ Such worn out expressions cannot be found in Swift's poems, unless in a fresh or satirical way, as parody. Herbert Davis in "The Poetry of Jonathan Swift" discusses his use of verbal parody in "On the Death of Dr. Swift" and in "Clad All in Brown," then summarizes Swift's purpose in a statement that reminds us of the Dean's purpose in preaching:

They are a good example of the kind of thing D. H. Lawrence came to indulge in, which he called "Nettles" and described as bursts of anger, flung out spontaneously and providing the writer with a vent for his feelings — the sort of feelings it is good to get rid of. But it must be admitted that Swift is rather the moralist, concerned not so much with his own emotional condition as with the effect he aims to have on his readers.⁴⁵

For Swift, then, parody is not a diversion to entertain himself or his friends. It is an attempt to use fresh language in old forms to communicate his moral concerns.

It does not seem to be stretching this point to suggest that Swift's metrical pattern is another attempt to avoid the familiar and entice attention through freshness. According to Clarence L. Kulischek, over half of the poems "worth counting" are in octosyllables,⁴⁶ although he also uses the heroic couplet and a long irregular line (as in "Mrs. Harris' Petition"). The effect of the octosyllabic line is generally to awaken the reader only gradually but decisively to the gravity of the subject. The devastating effect of this metrical style is especially seen in some of the later poems ("A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed," "Phyl-

⁴³ "To Stella," lines 50-60.

⁴⁴ "Letter," 342.

⁴⁵ *CE* 2 (1941) 110.

⁴⁶ "Swift's Octosyllabics and the Hudibrastic Tradition," *JEGP* 53 (1954) 361.

lis, or the Progress of Love,") or the less satirical "Cadenus and Vanessa." The Hudibrastic roughness of the lines and the forced rhymes at the end are usually humorous; but while the lines are laughing the words are often tragic. The incongruity of meter and meaning joins the many parodic elements to produce an unexpected freshness — a freshness that Swift hopes will surprise us into reality.

Affectation in preaching must be shunned, Swift warns his young friend: "Although, as I have already observed, our English tongue is too little cultivated in this kingdom, yet the faults are nine in ten owing to affectation, and not to want of understanding."⁴⁷ Swift's letter demonstrates his meaning, for it is a model of simplicity. It is some of Swift's best writing. This same simplicity is noted in his poems, which deceive many critics into thinking that they are all just trifles which the Dean neither took seriously nor intended that we should. The poems demonstrate the effects of careful revision, the lack of adornment that desires communication above elaboration, persuasion above prettiness. He can employ extended metaphors, for example, but when he does (as in "To a Lady," 117-140) he carefully explains its application, so that the reader knows precisely that "metaphoric meat and drink is to understand and think." His simplicity is the immediacy of concrete language; he shuns Dryden's abstractions and personifications for words that "tell it like it is":

The youth with broomy stumps began to trace
The kennel-edge, where wheels had worn the place.
The small-coal man was heard with cadence deep,
Till drown'd in shriller notes of chimney-sweep.⁴⁸

He also avoids euphemisms, except to ridicule them. Thus his simple language offends many. It may offend — but it communicates.

As he would avoid abstractness of language, so would he avoid speculation upon the ephemeral. "I do not find that you are anywhere directed in the canons or articles, to attempt explaining the mysteries of the Christian religion. . ."⁴⁹ he writes to the young divine. His poetry likewise eschews the metaphysical and concentrates on the tangible — and reformable:

But stop, ambitious Muse, in time,
Nor dwell on subjects too sublime.
In vain on lofty heels I tread,
Aspiring to exalt my head;
With hoop expanded wide and light,
In vain I tempt too high a flight.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ "Letter," 342.

⁴⁸ "A Description of Morning," lines 9-12.

⁴⁹ "Letter," 355.

⁵⁰ "A Panegyric on the Dean," lines 319-324.

His final advice to the divine that is germane to this study is to avoid appeals to passion:

A plain convincing reason may possibly operate upon the mind, both of a learned and ignorant hearer, as long as they live, and will edify a thousand times more than the art of wetting the handkerchiefs of a whole congregation, if you were sure to attain it. If your arguments be strong, in God's name offer them in as moving a manner as the nature of the subject will properly admit, wherein reason and good advice will be your safest guides; but beware of letting the pathetic part swallow up the rational.⁵¹

The conclusion of "To a Lady" closely conforms to this advice. The poet cannot appeal to her vanity or sentiment through conventional poetry. Reasoning is his method, and truth his goal:

Make you able upon sight
To decide of wrong and right;
Talk with sense whate'er you please on;
Learn to relish truth and reason!
Thus we both shall gain our prize;
I to laugh, and you grow wise.⁵²

Perhaps the most disturbing element in Swift's poems is his appeal to reason. He exaggerates, parodies, insults, disgusts — whatever he must do to make us see through the truth about our society and ourselves. Because we affect to be "in God's image" he exaggerates our bestiality; because we affect to be civilized he focuses upon our cruelty; because we would rather weep than work, laugh than love, imitate than originate, he would rather ridicule than praise. He will not cater to our sentimentality; he will pitilessly appeal to our reason — even if he has to appear unreasonable and insensitive to do so. As written by an earnest moralist, then, his "Strephon and Chloe," his "Beautiful Young Nymph," his "Phyllis" seem not pornographic but compassionate. Perhaps, he seems to suggest, if we can perceive love in its awful reality, we can avoid at least the pains of deception (although the pains of the undeceived are probably only slightly less agonizing than those of the deceived):

In every case it is a "goddess," "so divine a Creature," "heavenly Chloe," who is exposed; or rather what is exposed is the illusion in the head of the adoring male, the illusion that the goddess is all head and wings with no bottom to betray her sublunary infirmities.⁵³

⁵¹ "Letter," 345.

⁵² lines 282-287.

⁵³ Norman O. Brown, "The Excremental Vision" from *Life Against Death*, pp 179-201. Reprinted in *Swift: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Ernest Tuveson (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1964), 39.

It is better to see the total person rather than the idealized one; it is better, he seems to suggest, to see one's transitory significance than live in the delusion of exalted importance:

Here shift the scene, to represent
How those I love my death lament.
Poor Pope would grieve a month, and Gay
A week, and Arbuthnot a day.⁵⁴

We may not agree that this brutally realistic view of life is better than our own, but we must agree that Swift believes so. Like an earnest young clergyman, he wishes his parishioners to lead a perfect life:

His satire points at no defect,
But what all mortals may correct.⁵⁵

If, then, Swift's verses seem to be unpoetic — even anti-poetic — they are purposely so. It may be no mistake that the moral earnestness seems stronger than conventional poetry tolerates. And if he makes us uncomfortable, that is just too bad. Some preaching, especially about moral behavior, is supposed to be discomforting.

⁵⁴ "On the Death of Dr. Swift," lines 205-209.

⁵⁵ "On the Death of Dr. Swift," lines 460,461.

FITZGERALD'S BABYLON

by Wanda Morgan

"And he suddenly realized the meaning of the word 'dissipate'—to dissipate into thin air; to make nothing out of something."—Charlie Wales

Charlie Wales revisits Paris, the setting for an 18-month-long binge three years previously at the height of the late-1920's financial boom which had culminated in his wife's death of heart trouble and a stay in a sanitarium for alcoholics for him.

He is back in Paris to persuade his wife's sister, Marion, that he is stable enough to assume the guardianship of his nine-year-old daughter, Honoria. In her dying moments Charlie's wife, Helen, had exacted a promise from Marion that she would care for the child, and Charlie, from the sanitarium, had agreed to relinquish legal guardianship.

Now he wants his child back. He had loved her mother, even though they had become quarrelsome and hostile during the wild extravagant years, and in his drunken stupor he had abused her; but now Honoria is the most important thing in the world to him. He compares his priorities of two years ago with those of the present:

He tried to picture how Lorraine had appeared to him then—very attractive; Helen was unhappy about it, though she said nothing. Yesterday, in the restaurant, Lorraine had seemed trite, blurred, worn away. He emphatically did not want to see her, and he was glad Alix had not given away his hotel address. It was a relief to think, instead, of Honoria, to think of Sundays spent with her and of saying good morning to her and of knowing she was there in his house at night, drawing her breath in the darkness. . . .

Marion despises her dead sister's husband for many reasons, but mostly because of the success that had made possible the long, extravagant, carefree year and a half as American expatriates in Paris while

she and her husband, more permanent immigrants, were struggling to make ends meet. She takes vengeance by blaming him for Helen's death and by clinging to her legal control of his child.

Charlie pleads his case: he has been sober for a year and a half; he is doing well financially in business in Prague where his past is not known; he is bringing his sister over from America to look after the child; he can afford to take a French governess for Honoria back to Prague with them.

Marion reluctantly yields, seeing that she can no longer justify her position, and final arrangements are being made. It is the last evening in the home of Lincoln and Marion Peters; it is dinnertime and warmth pervades the little family gathering. The doorbell rings and two left-over friends from Charlie's wasted years appear, inebriated and offensive. They have wangled the address from a bartender well-known to them and to Charlie from the past good times. Marion goes into shock at their presence in her home and illogically overreacts, taking the incident as evidence of Charlie's unregeneracy and untrustworthiness, and the deal to release Honoria is off.

The story ends with Charlie returning to Prague alone, lonely and miserable, aware that his frustrations are the result of "dissipation"—he had made nothing of something. "I heard you lost a lot in the crash," says Paul, the bartender at the Ritz. "I lost everything I wanted in the boom," Charlie responds.

Ashes-in-the-mouth bitterness pervades this story by F. Scott Fitzgerald, written in 1931, out of his own life experience as were all of his works. Malcolm Cowley, in his Introduction to *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, published posthumously, wrote,

"I do not find it a serious flaw in his work that the heroes ended by resembling himself or that he gave most of them Irish names or at least (to Dick Diver, of *Tender Is the Night*) a faint Irish melody in the voice in order to make the identification stronger. Sometimes the heroes started as very different persons and were transformed imperceptibly, as he worked over them, into an image of the author. When his friend Bishop wrote him a critical letter about *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald answered, 'Also you are right about Gatsby being blurred and patchy. I never at any one time saw him clear myself—for he started out as one man I knew and then changed into myself—the amalgam was never clear in my mind.'"⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Malcolm Cowley, Introduction to *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), xviii.

"Too much too soon" is the theme of his life and of his work. John Peale Bishop, in his memorial poem to Fitzgerald, recounts the desperation of his latter years:

"I have lived with you the hour of your humiliation,
I have seen you turn upon the others in the night
And of sad self-loathing
Concealing nothing
Heard you cry: I am lost. But you are lower!
And you had that right.
The damned do not so own to their damnation."⁵⁷

Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, cast into sudden prominence and instant wealth by the success of his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, published in 1920, lived wildly and irresponsibly, with Scott feverishly producing stories to pay the bills until Zelda's mental breakdown in 1930 from which she never recovered.

Charles Shain, in a *University of Minnesota Pamphlets on American Writers* issue recalls those years:

"The twenties were less than three months old when Fitzgerald's first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, arrived and immediately became a famous American book. Within weeks of this first success a second brand-new, postwar product, his stories of the flapper and her boy friends, made it clear that the twenties would be his oyster and that he, handsome, clever, and lucky Scott Fitzgerald, would be one the brightest figures of the new age. The climax of his fortunes arrived, we can see now, very rapidly. In 1925 came the splendid artistic success of the *The Great Gatsby*, and then in the second half of the twenties the days and months of his private world began to descend into tragedy. He could not bring the order into his life that would allow him to write his next novel. By the end of the twenties he was living too high and drinking too much. In April 1930 Zelda Fitzgerald had the mental breakdown that ended the romantic life they had built together over the preceding ten years."⁵⁸

"Babylon Revisited" differs from earlier works in that it is concerned with aftermath. Previous novels and stories had shown from many different angles the rich living out their over-indulged lives. "Babylon Revisited" only touches on the joys of the super-rich, recounting them as aberrations rather than the norm, and relating them directly with the disaster to which they led.

⁵⁷ Ibid., xxii.

⁵⁸ Charles E. Shain, *F. Scott Fitzgerald* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1961), 5.

The contrast between the Paris that was and the Paris of the aftermath are known to us through Charlie's view of it. His feelings of revulsion at Lorraine's coarseness, the cheap lure of the bars, the memory of his own debauchery and his implication in and sense of guilt about Helen's death and the loss of Honoria vivify the brief description: "the stillness in the Ritz bar was strange and portentous. It was not an American bar any more—he felt polite in it, and not as if he owned it. I had gone back into France."

With vision limited to the eyes, senses, memory, of Charlie Wales, the action of the story moves from Charlie's reintroduction to Paris via the Ritz bar with memories of insanely prosperous pre-Crash experiences as the back-drop, on to a realization that the purpose of his return is the expectation of regaining custody of his daughter, lost because of his and his wife's corruption by "too much too soon." His own anxiety and tension at defending his entitlement to her before his hostile sister-in-law lead to the denouement, when he appears to have won the victory, only to have it reversed by the re-emergence of his past in the persons of Lorraine and Duncan in the Peters' living room.

We believe that Charlie Wales is entitled to Honoria, not just because he is her father and he loves her, but because he is a good and mature human being who will do his best to provide for her in every possible way. So we feel with him the bitterness at having lost her again, not for not for righteous reasons or the child's best interest, but for Marion's bitterness, anger and unreasonable hate, rooted in greed and envy. Hints of age-old concepts of morality and uprightness emerge where individuals are forever condemned by one moment of weakness, and we remember a long-ago sinner in another Babylon whose accusers were admonished, "Let him who is without sin, cast the first stone," and who was rescued "to go her way and sin no more." Fitzgerald directs the sympathies and understanding of the reader to the remorseful Charlie.

Fitzgerald's technique of taking a poignant personal experience and distilling the essence of it so that the sensations of the original are made available to his reader are never more effective than in this five-part story. Guilt, remorse, frustration, despair at the destruction his irresponsible life-style produced, the bitterness in the mouth, are relived by the author, but also experienced by the reader.

The impressionistic descriptive quality typical of the mature Fitzgerald functions extremely well in "Babylon Revisited" to capture the

emotional response of Charlie Wales to Paris-after-the-good times: "Outside the fire-red, gas-blue, ghost-green signs shone smokily through the tranquil rain. . . ."

Imagination, idealization of youth, and intensity of felt experience, characteristic of the romanticist, are Fitzgerald's literary tools, reflecting his early interest in Keats. However, in his later writing, of which "Babylon Revisited" might be considered the first effort, these are more finely worked, evidence of Fitzgerald's maturing both as a writer and as a man, but also reflecting later influences such as Henry James, and his association with more naturalistic, realistic writers such as Gertrude Stein and his on-again, off-again friend, Ernest Hemingway.

Arthur Mizener, writer of a popular biography of Fitzgerald, *The Far Side of Paradise*, wrote of his romanticism,

"Fitzgerald's great accomplishment is to have realized in completely American terms the developed romantic attitude, in the end at least in that most responsible form in which all the romantic's sensuous and emotional responses are disciplined by his awareness of the goodness and evilness of human experience.. He had a kind of instinct for the tragic view of life and remarked himself how even at the very beginning of his career, 'all the stories that came into my head had a touch of disaster in them—the lovely young creatures in my novels went to ruin, the diamond mountains of my short stories blew up, my millionaires were as beautiful and damned as Thomas Hardy's peasants.' He had, moreover, with all its weakness and strength and in a time when the undivided understanding was very rare, an almost exclusively creative kind of intelligence, the kind that understands things, not abstractly, but only concretely, in terms of people and situations and events."⁵⁹

Fitzgerald considered himself a novelist and only wrote short stories to pay for his extravagant life-style. Shain points out,

"He wanted to be both a good writer and a popular one. His high living, he knew, depended on magazine money and it is significant that he devoted most of his time to short fiction during those years between 1926 and 1931 when his life became most disordered and the completion of a new novel came hard. Yet he thought of himself most proudly as a novelist. His most poignant confession of a failure to be true to his talent he expressed to his daughter six months before he died: 'Doubt and worry—you are as crippled by them as I am by my inability to handle money or my self-indulgences of the past. . . . What little I've accomplished has been by the most laborious and uphill work, and I wish now I'd never relaxed or looked back—but said

⁵⁹ Arthur Mizener, "The Poet of Borrowed Time," in *F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work*, ed. Alfred Kazin (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1952) 23.

at the end of *The Great Gatsby*: I've found my line—from now on this comes first. This is my immediate duty—without this I am nothing.' ”⁶⁰

Fitzgerald had the unusual distinction of being the chief representative of the Flapper era, but also, in a sense, of participating in its creation by the outrageous life-style lived out in full view of the American public, and his fiction, which was ingested, digested, acted out by the under-thirty generation of the 1920's. He also occupies the unique position of chronicler of the age. Malcolm Cowley writes of this in his Introduction: “Fitzgerald not only represented the age, but came to suspect that he had helped create it, by setting the patterns of conduct that were followed by persons a little younger than himself . . . Fitzgerald lived in his great moments, and lived in them again when he remembered their drama but he also stood apart from them and coldly reckoned their causes and consequences. That is his doubleness or irony and it is one of his distinguishing marks as a writer. . . .”⁶¹

He produced only five novels: *This Side of Paradise* (1920); *The Beautiful and Damned* (1922); *The Great Gatsby* (1925); *Tender is the Night* (1934); and *The Last Tycoon*, unfinished at his death of a heart attack in December of 1940.

He was prolific as a short story writer, and some of his finest work is seen in his short stories. “Babylon Revisited” is one of the most successful ones. Collections of his short stories are: *Flappers and Philosophers* (1920); *Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922); *All the Sad Young Men* (1926); *Taps at Reveille* (1935); *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, collected and introduced by Malcolm Cowley in 1951; *Babylon Revisited and Other Stories* (1960); *The Pat Hobby Stories* (1962).

He attempted one play, *The Vegetable*, which was not successful, and published a collection of essays about his emotional breakdown, *The Crack-Up* (1945).

⁶⁰ Shain, 24-25.

⁶¹ Cowley, xii.

II. BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION AND THEOLOGY

TABLE FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS AND THE “LORD’S MEAL” AT CORINTH

by S. Scott Bartchy

Because James Van Buren was the first person to challenge me to reflect historically on “the Lord’s Supper,”⁶² I am delighted to have this opportunity to present to him an essay on 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 as a modest expression of my gratitude for the variety of ways in which his ministries of scholarship, teaching, and preaching have strengthened others and myself. I hope that he will be encouraged by it and that its readers may be further motivated to practice table fellowship with Jesus the Lord as “an anticipatory gift of the final consummation.”⁶³

In light of the exceedingly rich opportunities for historical and theological comment presented by Paul’s admonition of the Corinthian Christians in 1 Cor 11:17-34, the purpose of this essay must be regarded as quite limited. It seeks only to answer three basic questions:

- I. What specific problem in the Corinthian congregation provoked Paul to write these words?
- II. Why did Paul refer to “the institution of the Lord’s Supper” (vss 23-25) in this attempt to correct the Corinthians’ behavior?
- III. How did Paul’s admonitions regarding self-examination and “discerning the body” (vss 27-32) help to solve the Corinthians’ specific problem?

⁶² See his six-part article entitled simply “The Lord’s Supper” in *Christian Standard* 88 (1953) 277-278, 293-294, 309-310, 325-326, 341-342, 359-360.

⁶³ From the final words of *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* by Joachim Jeremias (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) 262: “To put it quite simply: table fellowship with Jesus is an anticipatory gift of the final consummation. Even now God’s lost children may come home and sit down at their Father’s table.”

It is my judgment that the current key to a better understanding of 1 Cor 11:17-34 will be found in the answer to the second question, to which the largest part of this essay is devoted and from which the title of the essay has been derived. To be sure, the appropriateness of all three answers which are proposed here may be determined first of all by the extent to which they help clarify the line of thinking which runs through the entire passage. For purposes of reference it will be convenient to refer to vss 17-22 as section 1, to vss 23-26 as section 2, and to vss 27-34 as section 3.

I. What was the Problem at the “Lord’s Meal” in Corinth?

Paul begins and ends the first section (vss 17-22) of his discussion of the “Lord’s Meal” (*kyriakon deipnon* - vs 20) and the table fellowship in the Corinthian congregation by stating clearly his unwillingness to praise their behavior and ways of treating each other. When they come together, “it is not for the better but for the worse” (vs 17b). Their meetings are “for the worse” because of the “divisions” (*schismata* - vs 18) in the fellowship, i.e. because of the lack of concern for the poorer members and the related impatience which led to both excess and hunger (vs 21). By their actions the Corinthian Christians who were better off “despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing” (vs 22b - RSV).

The existence of such a situation in this congregation as well as Paul’s response to it are clearly based on two facts: 1) The congregation was not a socially homogeneous unit but rather was composed of people from a wide variety of economic, educational, social-legal, religious, and racial backgrounds.⁶⁴ Specifically clear here is the fact that those who have enough to be able to eat and drink to excess have been called by God into the same congregation with those “who have nothing” (see the “low and despised in the world” mentioned in 1 Cor 1:28). 2) Those congregational members who have more than enough for themselves, and who therefore can in large part control the distribution of food at the common meals, have either misunderstood much that Paul had already taught them about the “fellowship of Jesus

⁶⁴ The best social description of the congregation in Corinth has been recently provided by Gerd Theissen “Soziale Schichtung in der korinthischen Gemeinde; Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des hellenistischen Urchristentums,” ZNW 65 (1974) 232-272. See Abraham J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects of Early Christianity* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1977) 71-84, for a good analysis of Theissen’s contribution.

Christ" (see 1:9) or were acting in disobedience to what they had already understood. Therefore Paul responds to their actions with irony. ("What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in?") and with a pointed reminder of his basic teaching on the matter (vss 23-26).

In brief the basis of this dilemma could be described as follows. The faulty religious convictions and immature self-understanding of the Corinthians did not yet stimulate the desire or release the power within the privileged members of the congregation to call into question the economic and social barriers which so effectively caused "divisions" between human beings in the world outside. Many of the Corinthians were clearly rejoicing in a conviction of personal fellowship with the *exalted Christ* (see, e.g., 4:7-8) which in their view evidently did not require a loving concern for each other or for unity within the congregation. This spiritual individualism served to reinforce rather than to remove the divisive power of economic distinctions, with the result that the Corinthian's manner of celebrating the "Lord's Meal" destroyed rather than built up the unity of the congregation.

In sharp contrast, Paul's expectations for this meal were rooted in the reconciling death of Christ (vs 26); and the tradition which he had "received from the Lord" (vs 23) required that the "Lord's Meal" demonstrate the acceptance and forgiveness between human beings made possible by that death. Exaltation with the resurrected Christ was not a possession of the present but rather a hope of the future ("until he comes" - vs 26). In the meantime, the gospel of God's reconciliation of the world through Christ (see 2 Cor 5:11-6:2) demanded that righteous social consequences rather than arrogance and divisiveness be practiced within the congregation.⁶⁵ "Because there is one loaf," Paul stressed, "we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf" (1 Cor 10:17). He expected that this new unity would be confirmed by the way in which the Corinthians treated each other. The following observations support this brief analysis.

1. In the light of vs 22 the warning at the end of the passage in vs 33— "So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another"— makes it quite clear that the basic problem which Paul hoped to solve with the previous verses was that of economic and social divisions at the Lord's meal.⁶⁶ On the basis of the evidence known to us, it is easy to reconstruct the situation. Apparently the congregation

⁶⁵ See, e.g., how Paul applies the gospel to the problem of law suits in 1 Cor 6:1-11 ("Why not rather be wronged?"), to marriage relationships in 1 Cor 7:3-5 (mutual submission), and to physical needs among Christians in 2 Cor 8:13-15 ("Our desire is ... that there may be equality.").

⁶⁶ There is now a broad consensus among scholars that the "divisions" which Paul mentions in vs 18 have been caused by the circumstances which he describes in vs 20-22.

was meeting in the large home of a wealthy member such as Gaius (see Rom 16:23).⁶⁷ Those Christians in the congregation who were the associates and peers of the hosts were the first to arrive for the meeting, and they probably brought food and drink with them to share in a common meal. Before the poorer members of the congregation arrived, the economically privileged ones had already consumed the available food, which meant that "those who had nothing" were forced to experience hunger at the meeting.

Perhaps the privileged Christians in Corinth had not even thought that it was of any significance that the others had not yet arrived. Perhaps they were even pleased that they could enjoy separate table fellowship with those with whom they felt comfortable —family, friends, and peers. They, like most human beings, may well have preferred to be at table with those who already thought like, acted like, looked like, and smelled like they did. Thus, it may not only have been a casual indifference but also a specific intention to avoid an awkward social situation which led the more prosperous Corinthians to eat, indeed to go beyond sober bounds, before the poorer members had even arrived at the place of meeting.⁶⁸ Thus Paul warns: "when you come together to eat, wait for one another."⁶⁹

2. This understanding of the problem is reinforced by the description of the prosperous Corinthians' behavior given in vs 21: "As you eat, each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else" (NIV). Guenther Bornkamm, who has written an extraordinarily rich and helpful essay on 1 Cor 11:17-34, correctly insists on the translation of *prolambanei* in vs 21 with the phrase "he takes before hand."⁷⁰ By not waiting for each other, "the congregation, which should be a con-

⁶⁷ A. J. Malherbe, *Social Aspects*, 73-74.

⁶⁸ Gerd Theissen, on the other hand, argues that the chief problem here was not caused by conflicting times for beginning the meeting but rather by sharp distinctions in both the quality and amount of food brought to the meeting by the rich and the poor. "Soziale Integration und sakramentales Handeln; Eine Analyse von 1 Kor. 11:17-34," *Nov T* 16 (1974) 179-206, especially 186-195. By suggesting that the rich had meat among their provisions, Theissen seeks to show that 1 Cor 10:14-22 (regarding the eating of meat offered to idols) and 11:17-34 treat the same problem from different perspectives.

⁶⁹ See James Moffatt, *The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951) 158-161, for a very good description of the situation.

⁷⁰ Guenther Bornkamm, "Lord's Supper and Church in Paul," 128 and 155 in his *Early Christian Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969). Bornkamm (p. 156) stresses that "the temporal sense in *prolambanein* may not be pushed aside (cf. Mark 14:8.)"

gregation of brothers (and sisters) precisely in their gathering for worship, presents a shameless picture of social cleavage.”⁷¹

3. Since Paul does not say that the poorer members of the congregation were prevented from participating in the eating and drinking of the Eucharistic bread and wine, it seems certain that Paul saw the problem to be caused by the behavior of the more prosperous members during their common meal which they believed was *before* the service of worship rather than integral to it. These Corinthians had apparently concluded that how and with whom they spent their time before the actual celebration of the Eucharist was their own business. Bornkamm suggests that Paul’s response to them could be paraphrased: “Through your conduct in the meal before it, the celebration of the Lord’s Supper is placed in question and becomes an impossibility.”⁷²

4. These more prosperous Christians evidently believed that they were indeed celebrating the “Lord’s Meal” in their meetings. So Paul wrote with strong words: “When you meet together, it is *not* the Lord’s meal (*kyriakon deipnon*) that you eat. For in eating each one goes ahead with his *own* meal (*idion deipnon*)” (vs 21). What view of the “Lord’s Meal” could have permitted the Corinthians to have acted so ungenerously toward the poorer members of the congregation? How could they have concluded that it was possible for them to celebrate the “Lord’s Meal” without having taken seriously the physical needs of the other members of the congregation?

According to a widespread view of the matter, the Christians at Corinth had “abolished the idea of receiving the body of Christ: for them the blessed bread was no longer ‘body’ and they ate it as ordinary food.”⁷³ In light of Paul’s line of argument in 1 Cor 10, however, Bornkamm sharply challenges this common view, concluding that the Corinthians were to the contrary holding to a “highly sacramental celebration of the meal.”⁷⁴ That is, it was not that the Corinthians had “too low a view” of the elements of bread and wine but rather “too high a view” in which these elements were believed to bond each believer to the resurrected Lord in a very individualistic manner.

⁷¹ G. Bornkamm, “Lord’s Supper” 126. See also my discussion of the nature of this cleavage in *MALLON CHRESAI: First-Century Slavery and Interpretation of 1 Cor 7:21* (Missoula, Montana: Society of Biblical Literature, 1973) 62.

⁷² “Lord’s Supper” 127. Bornkamm (p. 128) correctly observes: “real table fellowship is something quite different from charity at a distance.”

⁷³ See, e.g., Hans Lietzmann, *Mass And Lord’s Supper: A Study in the History of the Liturgy* (Leiden: Brill, 1955) 207-208.

⁷⁴ “Lord’s Supper” 127. Bornkamm calls the Corinthian Christians “very crude sacramentalists,” to whom Paul has already strongly indicated in ch. 10 “that the possession of the sacraments in no way guarantees eternal salvation.”

Apparently everyone, including the poor members who arrived "late," was able to share the bread and the wine of "the high and holy sacrament."⁷⁵ The Corinthians who were better off were saying that the truly important part of their coming together was the celebration of the "sacrament." Bornkamm (p. 129) concludes that "the increasingly high sacramental evaluation of the Eucharist" had resulted in a devaluation of the common meal together, the "Agape" or "love feast," to the extent that the love and unity of the congregation were flagrantly injured. Summing up, Bornkamm (p. 129) correctly states: "According to all this, in contrast with the way this matter usually is presented, one could say that it is the meal in Corinth that has been profaned, not the sacramental act."

5. Thus it was not Paul's primary intention to separate the "Agape" from the "Lord's Meal" when he urged the ungenerous and insensitive Corinthians to eat at home (vss 22, 34). Rather for Paul the common meal and the Eucharistic celebration belong so closely together that "he can maintain that the bad state of affairs in the common meal make the entire Lord's Supper illusory."⁷⁶ But Paul was evidently ready to sacrifice the "love feast" or common meal if the Corinthians were not willing to share their food and drink with *all* the members of the congregation. Yet is it not clear that simply eliminating the common meal from the life of the congregation in Corinth would not have solved the basic problem Paul dealt with here? To have stopped the common meal would by no means have corrected the fundamental issue if the more privileged Corinthians continued in other ways to ignore the needs of the poorer members of the congregation.

II. WHY DID PAUL THINK THAT HIS "LORD'S MEAL" TRADITION WOULD INFLUENCE THE CORINTHIANS TO CHANGE THEIR BEHAVIOR?

Paul claims that he cannot commend the manner in which the Corinthians have been treating each other *because* (*ego gar* - vs 23a) of the tradition which he has "received from the Lord" about Jesus' last

⁷⁵ Bornkamm, "Lord's Supper" 128.

⁷⁶ Bornkamm, 129.

meal before his crucifixion. This is a tradition which Paul had already taught the Corinthians during his eighteen months among them, and he begins the second section of his argument (vss 23-26) by reminding them briefly of this tradition.

What then was it about this tradition which Paul hoped would help persuade the Corinthians to come together "for the better?" Why, indeed, does Paul cite specifically this tradition from Jesus at just this point in his argument? It is surprising to me that Paul's purpose for arguing in this manner has not provoked greater curiosity. Surely it should not simply be taken for granted that a reference to Jesus' final meal before his crucifixion would be the most effective means at Paul's disposal for building his case against the unacceptable behavior of the Corinthians.

It could be asked, for example, whether a more direct statement about reconciliation such as is given in Eph 2:14-22 or in 2 Cor 5:12-20 might not have been more telling. Or perhaps such teaching as Paul gives in Phil 2:1-13 and Rom 12:3-16 regarding humility and genuine concern for others would have functioned just as well if not better at this point in 1 Cor 11. It could also be asked if Paul's line of reasoning might not have been more clearly stated by passing from the questions and answers in vs 22 directly to the exhortations in section 3 beginning with vs 27. To have done so would have unmistakably linked the divisive and humiliating behavior which is censured in vss 18-22 to the "unworthy manner" in which the Corinthians ate of "the bread" and drank of "the cup of the Lord" (vs 27).⁷⁷

In any case, much recent scholarship dealing with I Cor 11:17-34 has indeed seemed to take for granted whatever function Paul had in mind for his reference to his tradition about Jesus' "last supper" in the context of 1 Cor 11.⁷⁸ Apparently the challenge of tracing the history of the tradition on which Paul draws here has too quickly drawn atten-

⁷⁷ F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* (New Century Bible; Greenwood, S.C.: Attic, 1971) 114, rightly links the two sections with the observation that the phrase "in an unworthy manner" was "a just assessment of the courtesy described in verse 21." So also William F. Orr and James A. Walther, *I Corinthians* (AB 32; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976) 273: "Verse 27, then, resumes the main discussion." And C. K Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968) 272, states simply: "What Paul means by *unworthily* is explained by verses 21f."

⁷⁸ See Bornkamm, "Lord's Supper" 129-130.

tion away from any attempt to determine *how* Paul expected this reference to aid him in his argument.⁷⁹

To be sure, C. K. Barrett does express his specific interest in accounting for "the use Paul makes of the incident" (p. 266). At the beginning of his discussion of vss 23-26, he states specifically that Paul here asserts "that the words and acts of Jesus at the Last Supper should be taken as controlling the supper eaten by the church in his own day" (p. 264). In his further exegesis, however, Barrett does not make clear in what way Paul planned for this citation of Jesus' words and acts to "control" or modify the Corinthians' attitudes and behavior at their common meal and worship.⁸⁰

Why, then, did Paul stress again to the Corinthians a tradition about the historical Jesus' final meal with his disciples, a tradition which evidently was already well known to them ("... what I also delivered to you" - vs 23), as a weighty part of his attempt to change the way they were treating each other? Forty years ago James Moffatt (p. 163) correctly concluded that "the story of [vss] 23-26 is not told for its own sake; it leads up to the instructions of 27-34, which form the sequel to 20-22." The "story," according to Moffatt (p. 166), leads to vss 27-34 by referring to table fellowship, "such as Jews understood, but table-fellowship with a content of divine self-sacrifice, which differentiated the covenant as the new distinctive basis of the Christian Church."

This important reference to Near Eastern table fellowship as the context for understanding the significance of vss 23-25 in the context of vss 17-34 apparently has gone relatively unnoticed and undeveloped until quite recently.⁸¹ In 1976 William Orr and James Walther stressed again the importance of using the Jewish practice of the com-

⁷⁹ See, e.g., Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975) 195-200; and Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1962) 114-118. F. F. Bruce (p. 110) notes that Paul "reminds his readers of the circumstances and purpose of its institution" (namely, the Eucharist), but he does not develop the idea. Even Bornkamm (pp. 130-146) seems to lose sight of his interest in accounting for the purpose of vss 23-25 in this context in the course of pursuing a myriad of fascinating details.

⁸⁰ Barrett's interest in hindering any interpretation of Paul's thought in which the wine is identified with the blood of Jesus or the bread with his physical body as such (p. 272) leads him to claim that "the Supper was not to Paul (whatever it may have been to other groups of Christians) a perpetuation of fellowship meals between Jesus and his disciples" (p. 271). He thereby apparently closes himself off from any consideration of Jesus' table fellowships in relation to 1 Cor 11.

⁸¹ See, e.g., H. Lietzmann's analysis of the development of the Lord's Supper in his *Mass and Lord's Supper* 204-208.

mon meal in order to understand the force of vss 23-25 in this context.⁸² They propose (p. 270) that Paul recalled the tradition which he "received from the Lord" (vs 23) in order "to show that the present abuses result from failing to continue the Master's practice." This practice and its proper consequence are described as follows (p. 270):

Jesus gave thanks, then broke bread, and said, 'This is my body for you.' All the church should be together to participate in the thanksgiving and to receive the bread which is broken for the whole company. Since every Jewish meal began by breaking bread, the whole meal is designated by the breaking of the bread.

Orr and Walther develop this observation by construing the neuter, demonstrative term "this" (*touto*), as found both in the phrase "this is my body" (vs 24) and in the phrase "do this in remembrance of me" (vss 24 and 25), as referring to the observance of the meal-as-such (p. 271). After surveying Paul's other uses of the term *touto*, these scholars argue (p. 272) that his "usual general reference of *touto* suggests that in both instances in 11:24 it has to do with the circumstance just described, that is, the dedication of the meal, which in turn draws the disciples together into a table fellowship."⁸³

This argument is completed with the proposal that when Jesus used the term "body" (rendered in vs 24 by the Greek word *sōma*) in the phrase "this is my body, which is for you," he was thus referring not to himself alone or to the bread in his hands but to the disciples who shared with him in the "close binding connection" of this intimate table fellowship.⁸⁴ Orr and Walther conclude (p. 273) that "*body*, then, in this passage (vs 24) may be understood to refer to the church, here recognized in its chief act of common worship, the Lord's Supper."

It is tempting to agree with this striking interpretation of vs 24b, since it is quite clear that Paul regarded every Christian as a member of the "body of Christ" (e.g., 1 Cor 10:17, 12:23-27; Rom 12:5), and since (as is argued below) it is the *congregation* to which Paul refers

⁸² "Traditional interpretations of 1 Cor 11 have been wrong in many particulars because they have not been read with the Jewish practice of the common meal in view." (Orr and Walther 269).

⁸³ Note that because of the repetition of the phrase "do this" in connection with the "cup" in vs 25, J. Jeremias (*The Eucharistic Words* 250) argues against understanding *touto* as referring to the whole meal. He prefers to limit the reference to "the rite of grace at table."

⁸⁴ Orr and Walther argue persuasively that "since the festival celebration includes action and idea, the notion is excluded that any particle of food is the body of Christ. (If Paul had wanted to convey that idea, his regular usage would have been to write, 'This bread is my body'; cf. *this bread* in vs 26, where reference to the *body* is pointedly missing.)"

with the word “body” in vs 29: “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the *body* (*sōma*) eats and drinks judgment upon himself.” Yet, in my judgment, full agreement is not possible because Orr and Walther do not adequately account for the significance of the phrase “which is for you” (*to hyper hymōn*) in vs 24. They state (p. 272): “This somehow is *for you* the body of Christ and it is effective for his *remembrance*.” A much stronger explanation than “somehow” must be provided to make the point. More convincing, on the other hand, is the suggestion that the phrase “do this” (*touto poieite*) in both vss 24c and 25c refers to the dedication of the meal and the resulting table fellowship.

By no means, however, have Orr and Walther probed the full range of the significance of ancient table fellowship for this text, especially of table fellowship with Jesus. For “the Master’s practice” to which they refer should not be limited to those words and acts of Jesus specifically mentioned in vss 23-25. Rather the life-context of this tradition in the culture and activity of Jesus must be investigated more fully.⁸⁵ The result of such an investigation, I suggest, is the conclusion that Paul not only had in mind here the historical Jesus’ practice of blessing and breaking bread with his disciples but also Jesus’ eagerness to share table fellowship with all persons, especially the poor and the outcasts. “The present abuses” in the Corinthian congregation do result from failing to continue “the Master’s practice,” namely his practice of demonstrating his love, solidarity, and forgiveness by means of his open table fellowship.

It is clearly very important for Western readers of 1 Cor 11:17-24 to be reminded of the deep significance of table fellowship in Near Eastern cultures. Joachim Jeremias (p. 204), speaking from his masterful grasp of those cultures, states that “for the oriental every table fellowship is a guarantee of peace (from the very earliest times to the present day), of trust, of brotherhood. Table fellowship is a fellowship of life.” The sense of personal solidarity which was thus presupposed and expressed in any table fellowship in first-century Palestine formed the basis for the Pharisees’ sharp protest against Jesus’ open table fellowship “with tax collectors and sinners” (see Mark 2:15-17). For it was basic to the Pharisees’ understanding of God’s Law that the pious could have table fellowship *only* with the righteous.

⁸⁵ According to Bornkamm, (p. 132) “nothing allows us to interpret the verses (23-25) as a citation extracted from the larger whole of a passion tradition.” Now it must also be said that nothing allows us to interpret these verses apart from the traditions about the special character of Jesus’ table fellowships.

It was thus already greatly irritating to many of Jesus' contemporaries that he as a teacher in Israel was so disrespectful of their traditions when choosing his dinner companions. Indeed, in their judgment, this teacher's practice of open table fellowship constituted direct disobedience to the divine law. Then as the word began to spread among the people that Jesus was more than a rabbi, perhaps a prophet or even one greater, the Pharisees' righteous indignation against Jesus and his open fellowship could only keenly increase.

The mounting indignation and skepticism which Jesus' behavior at table provoked is vividly summarized by Luke in his description of a meal in Galilee in the home of Simon the Pharisee (see Luke 7:36-50) at which Jesus permitted a woman who was known to be either a prostitute or a person who was married to an outcast (such as a publican) to wash and anoint his feet. Simon comments: "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner" (Luke 7:39 - RSV). Luke makes the same point clear by a scene in Jericho placed just before his description of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Jesus invited himself to table fellowship in the home of a renowned sinner, the rich chief tax collector Zacchaeus. And the people murmur: "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner" (Luke 19:7 - RSV).

Luke also makes clear that these occasions of table fellowship were used by Jesus as events in which he both proclaimed and demonstrated forgiveness and salvation. To the murmuring crowd who had gathered before Zacchaeus' house, Jesus boldly states: "Today salvation has come to this house." To the sinful woman who was rejected by Simon the Pharisee, Jesus says: "Your sins are forgiven." In a culture in which symbolic action meant far more than it usually does in the Western world, Jesus' contemporaries immediately understood his acceptance of outcasts into his table fellowship as a claim of authority to forgive them and to grant them worth before God.⁶ By eating with outcasts and sinners, Jesus placed them on the same level with the righteous, and the Pharisees and scribes passionately objected and murmured: "This man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2 - RSV).

Note also that Matthew and Luke share the tradition which states: "The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say: 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" (Matt 11:19/Luke 7:34). They also share the tradition in which the messianic table fellowship provides the central focus for the Christian mission. In Matt 22:1-14 an initial climax is reached with the words: "And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found,

⁶ J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words* 204.

both bad and good" (vs 10). And in Luke 14:15-24, the householder of the parable commands his servants to "go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame" (vs 21).

After Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:27-29), Jesus' open table fellowship must have become increasingly meaningful to those who shared in it and increasingly provocative to those who rejected this further demonstration of his messianic authority. Jeremias (p. 205) puts it well: "After Peter's confession every act of eating and drinking with the master is table fellowship of the redeemed community with the redeemer, a wedding feast, a pledge of a share in the meal of the consummation." It is this understanding of the table fellowship of the historical Jesus which Jeremias properly insists is the basis for the continuation of the daily table fellowship after Jesus' death (see Acts 2:42-46).

Jeremias (p. 205) further notes that "the self-humiliation of Jesus in ministering to his disciples like a slave (John 13:1-17; Luke 22:27) can be seen in its true depth only when it is realized that this is the Messiah serving at the Messiah's meal." At this last occasion of table fellowship before his crucifixion, Jesus as acknowledged Messiah continued to practice the forgiveness and to display the dignity-creating, serving power of God which had characterized his table fellowships through his ministry. He even shared bread with the one who was about to betray him (Mark 14:20; Matt 26:23; Luke 22:21). It is this activity of acceptance, forgiveness, and demonstration of personal worth which provides the context in which Paul's pointed and compact citation of tradition from that final meal should be understood. For on the one hand "this meal of Jesus with his disciples must not be isolated, but should rather be seen as one of a long series of daily meals they had shared together."⁸⁷ And on the other, it is clear that Paul understood the death of Jesus as that act by means of which Jesus' forgiveness and reconciliation became available to all human beings (see, e.g., Rom 5:6-19).

In this light it becomes especially noteworthy that when writing to the Corinthians Paul brings into the closest connection the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ and God's calling of the poor and the outcasts, the "low and the despised," whom the world judges to be foolish, weak, and of no account (1 Cor 1:18-31). If God's welcome of the poor and outcasts had been so vividly and effectively demonstrated by Jesus precisely through his open table fellowships, could the congregation in

⁸⁷ Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words* 204.

Corinth do any less with respect to similar persons who have responded to the message of the gospel?⁸⁸

The fact that Paul regarded table fellowship among Christians as an essential demonstration of the power and truth of the gospel is clearly proved by his sharp confrontation with Peter (Cephas) on just this point (Gal 2:11-14). Describing Peter's activity in the integrated congregation (Jews and Gentiles) in Antioch on the Orontes, Paul wrote: "Before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party" (vs 12 - RSV).⁸⁹ Barnabas and the other Jewish Christians joined Peter in this violation of congregational unity. For Paul this withdrawal from table fellowship was tantamount to betrayal of the gospel itself. He characterizes Peter's separation of himself as "hypocrisy," as not being "straightforward about the truth of the gospel" (vs 14). Because of this breach of table fellowship, Paul says that he had to oppose Peter to his face "because he stood condemned" (vs 11).

In 1 Cor 11:17-34 Paul sought to correct a similar breach of table fellowship in the Corinthian congregation between the more privileged members and "those who have nothing." By reminding them of a tradition from the earthly Jesus' last table fellowship with his disciples (including Judas), Paul was forcing their attention not just on the "words of institution" but also on the larger context of the "Master's practice" of demonstrating his love, solidarity, and forgiveness by means of his table fellowship. Paul cited this tradition at just this point in order to motivate the more privileged Christians at Corinth to esteem rather than "despise the congregation of God" and to honor rather than "humiliate those who have nothing." They could do this by "waiting for one another" (vs 34) in order to share the table fellowship in Christ with each other. By doing so they would not only be allowing

⁸⁸ See Nils A. Dahl, "The Doctrine of Justification: Its Social Function and Implications" in his *Studies in Paul: Theology for the Early Christian Mission* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1977) 95-120: "What Paul stated systematically, Jesus had already lived, in his attitudes and in his activities" (p. 115). "The social implications of the doctrine of justification mean that believers must visibly express their unity in the fellowship of the Lord's table, as Paul so forcefully insists" (p. 120).

⁸⁹ For a solid discussion of recent work on this text see the forthcoming article by Frederick W. Norris, "Antioch on the Orontes as a Religious Center II: Judaism and Christianity before Constantine" in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (New York: de Gruyter).

the crucifixion of Christ to release them from their spiritual individualism and pride but also they would thereby be demonstrating powerfully the effect of the Lord's death in their manner of treating each other (vs 26).

To be sure, Paul refers to this shared meal not as "table fellowship with Jesus" but as "the Lord's Meal," thereby indicating that the host of the meal is the Jesus who gave his life for them in his crucifixion and whom God has raised to be called with his own name, "the Lord." If this meal belongs to Jesus the Lord, if it is to be indeed "the Lord's Meal," then the reconciliation which he both demonstrated in his life and sealed by his redemptive death must be proclaimed by the unity in which the Corinthians eat the bread and drink the cup.

III. HOW, THEN, DID PAUL'S ADMONITIONS REGARDING SELF-EXAMINATION AND "DISCERNING THE BODY" (vss 27-34) FURTHER REINFORCE HIS ATTEMPT TO SOLVE THE CORINTHIANS' SPECIFIC PROBLEM?

Many discussions of the meaning of 1 Cor 11:27-34 have been severely hampered by a certain amnesia regarding 11:17-22. The basic social problem facing Paul at "the Lord's Meal" in the Corinthian congregation seems to have been forgotten. Exegesis is then carried on as if Paul were in the middle of a medieval argument regarding sacramental theology or personal piety. The exhortation "to examine oneself" in vs 28 becomes referred exclusively to so-called "private sins," and the "unworthy manner" of vs 27 becomes a matter solely concerned with true doctrine about the "elements" or the proper attitude toward "the bread" and "the cup."

Fascination with the narrow history of the specific tradition which Paul cites in vss 23-25 has evidently led to a derailing of Paul's train of thought running through vss 17-34. Locating the historical context of vss 23-25 within the reconciling practice of Jesus' table fellowships, as I have sought to do above, will now prove to be most helpful in encouraging us to maintain close contact with the historical situation within the Corinthian congregation. The above analysis of Paul's line of thinking allows the following suggestions to be made or reinforced regarding an appropriate exegesis of this third section of Paul's argument.

1. Those in the Corinthian congregation who “eat of the bread or drink of the cup of the Lord in an *unworthy manner*” are the privileged members whom we have already met in vss 18-22, whose unworthy manner of treating “those who have nothing” at “the Lord’s Meal” could be described with such strong terms as “despising” and “humiliating.” C. K. Barrett (p. 272) observes correctly that “what Paul means by *unworthily* is explained by verses 21f., he is thinking of the moral failings of factiousness and greed which marked the Corinthian assembly. One who so eats takes not the Lord’s Supper but his own (verse 21).” Eating and drinking in this manner would contradict directly both the purpose and the spirit of Jesus’ offering of himself on the cross. Indeed, those Christians who eat and drink while ignoring “those who have nothing” identify themselves with those who were responsible for Christ’s crucifixion, i.e., become “guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.”⁹⁰

2. Thus each Christian in the congregation is exhorted in vs 28 to self-examination, not with respect to misunderstandings in liturgical procedures or to moral failure in some general sense, but precisely with respect to the quality of behavior which in vs 19 is described as “genuine.” These Christians had thus been challenged to ask themselves: “Am I guilty of despising and humiliating persons in this congregation for whom Christ died?” Paul urged that this self-examination with respect to the body of Christ had become necessary in order to escape the judgment of the Lord (vs 32). And note that within a few sentences he has developed this thought with the specific accent on mutuality: “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it” (12:26-27 - RSV).

3. In vs 29, then, Paul drives the point further home: this self-examination should lead to proper “discernment of the body,” i.e., to the recognition of the fact that “we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread” (10:17). To eat and drink “without discerning the body” (*mēdiakronōn to sōma*) meant doing so “without any consideration for the most elementary implications of their fellowship in Christ.⁹¹ Orr and Walther (p. 274) state this case very well:

If the body means the people of the church celebrating the supper together, judgment comes because they do not discriminate the divine nature of this fellowship and are guilty of splitting it apart and mistreating its humbler members.

⁹⁰ See the good analogy in 1 Cor 8:12: “Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ” (RSV).

⁹¹ F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians* 115.

Paul has directed vs 29 against those prosperous Corinthians whose “high sacramentalism” permitted them to think that they could celebrate “the Lord’s Meal” without sharing true table fellowship with all members of the congregation. In this connection Bornkamm notes well (p. 149) that the discussion of “the Lord’s Meal” in 1 Cor 10 is also intentionally placed directly in the context of responsibility of the Christians to each other. Following his stress on the unity of the congregation as “the body” (10:14-22), Paul urged the Corinthians: “Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor” (10:24). With all this in mind Bornkamm (p. 139) concludes that Paul understood the tradition about the “Lord’s Meal” which he received “in the sense of the ‘participation’-concept of 1 Cor 10:16 and that he never passed it on with any other meaning.”

4. Paul’s use of *diakrinein* (“to discern, evaluate, recognize”) in vs 31 (*heautous diekrinomen* - “let us recognize, discern ourselves”) strongly reinforces the exegesis which is being proposed here. Although Paul may not be entirely consistent in his use of this term in other contexts (see, e.g., 4:7 and 6:5), the striking appearances of this word so close to each other in vss 28 and 31 suggest that Paul repeated it for emphasis. That is, the objects of the verb in both cases refer to the same reality: *the body* (vs 29) and *ourselves* (vs 31). Orr and Walther (p. 274) are thus correct in claiming that “failure to discriminate his body is the same as failure to discriminate ourselves, and this means failure to recognize that people together in the church constitute the very presence of Christ and are to be treated appropriately.”

5. In the line of this exegesis, vs 34 follows quite fittingly as a very straightforward plea which is based both on the tradition which Paul “received from the Lord” and on his elaboration of this tradition in terms of “the body of Christ.” His plea: “So then, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.” Such a conclusion to the line of reasoning which he began with vs 17 can only seem “non-theological” or inappropriate to the reader who has yet to regard the very straining social situation in the Corinthian congregation with the same seriousness accorded to it by Paul. As the “body of Christ,” the congregation is to be the place where the love, acceptance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, which was demonstrated by Jesus in his table fellowships and which was then made available to the Corinthians through his death, was to be experienced by every member. In the fol-

lowing chapters, 12-14, Paul continues in the most direct way to apply this criterion, which he sums up with the term *oikodomē* ("building up"), to problems arising from the use of the "gifts of the Spirit."

Afterword

In contrast to most modern congregations of Christians, the congregation in Corinth was not socially homogeneous. Paul's evangelistic practice paralleled Jesus' own open table fellowships: *everyone* was truly welcome to respond. The social diversity in the Corinthians' congregation clearly produced many problems which are unknown to most modern congregations, precisely because patterns of selective evangelism strongly favor the formation of socially homogeneous groups. But even if a modern congregation were as much a cross-section of its society as was the case in the Corinthian *ekklēsia* the common practice of separating the table fellowship from the Eucharist might well obscure the real needs of "those who have nothing" just as much as had become the case in Corinth. Paul plead for a restoration of true table fellowship to "the Lord's Meal." His ironic comments about "eating at home" were meant to point to a "last resort" if the Corinthians refused to accept his basic message on this topic. This message was understood by the great preacher John Chrysostom far better than it seems to be in our century. After noting that the problem in 1 Cor 11 was the result of tension between rich and poor, the preacher laments that the custom of true table fellowship "was broken through, a custom most excellent, and most useful; for it was a foundation of love, and a comfort to poverty, and a corrective of riches, and an occasion of the highest philosophy, and an instruction of humility."⁹²

What is it then that prevents Christians in the twentieth century from practicing again such an excellent and useful custom? Are the hindrances, of whatever sort, really of greater importance than the need in our time to demonstrate table fellowship with Jesus?

⁹² *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the First Epistle of St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians* (Oxford: J. H. Parker, 1839) 370.

THE STRUCTURE AND MEANING OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:8-13

by Ronald E. Heine

The exegesis of 1 Cor 13 took a positive turn when scholars ceased considering it to be a general hymn in praise of love⁹³ and saw it as (1) not poetry, but rhetoric,⁹⁴ and (2) not general, but specific in relation to the Corinthian problem.⁹⁵ This insight has been vigorously applied to 1 Cor 13:8-13 in an article by Emanuel Miguens.⁹⁶ He sets forth his approach as follows.

Our section has to be understood against the concrete background of the Corinthian correspondence, more especially against the background of 1 Cor. Within 1 Cor our passage has closer links with chs. 13 and 14 which, therefore, provide the more immediate logical framework for it. In our section Paul is not propounding abstract teaching, he is dealing with the factual and actual situation of his community, as it is presented, first of all,

⁹³ See Emanuel Miguens, "1 Cor 13:8-13 Reconsidered," *CBQ* 37 (1975) 76. Several references are given by C. Spicq, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, II (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1966) 59. Jean Héring (*The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* [London: Epworth, 1962] 135) still calls it a "hymn glorifying agapé."

⁹⁴ So Harnack; see Jack T. Sanders, "First Corinthians 13: Its Interpretation Since the First World War," *Int* 20 (1966) 159. Fridricksen referred to it as a diatribe (*ibid.*). Spicq (*Agapè*, 59) calls it parenetic exhortation.

⁹⁵ Nils Johansson ("1 Cor. XIII and 1 Cor XIV," *NTS* 10 [1963-4] 383) considers Reitzenstein's publications in 1916, which argued that the chapter is dominated by a polemical tendency, to be a milestone in the interpretation of the chapter.

⁹⁶ *Supra*, note 1.

in chs. 12 and 14, and in other passages of 1 Cor (chs. 2 and 3). This historical 'Sitz' of our section seems to provide an adequate understanding of it.⁹⁷

I am in complete agreement with this approach and my study is governed by these same assumptions. Much of Giguens' attention, however, is devoted to the attempt to prove that the passage should not be interpreted eschatologically. It is my conclusion that the passage is strongly eschatological and that it is precisely the eschatological emphasis which ties it closely to the concrete background of 1 Cor. My study differs from Miguens' also in giving more attention to the rhetorical structure of the paragraph. We begin by analyzing the structure of 1 Cor 13:8-13 and showing how the structure points to the meaning of the passage.

The Structure of 1 Cor 13:8-13

1 Cor 13:8-13 is a skillfully constructed paragraph. Nils Lund has shown that it "is a chiastic arrangement of seven sections."⁹⁸ I regard Lund's analysis to be correct. It is possible, in addition, however, to see in this paragraph a series of antitheses framed by an opening and closing statement about love, the latter of which itself contains a minor antithesis.⁹⁹ This antithetical structure can be understood most clearly by separating the elements into two columns which we shall label present and future.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 80-1. Ira Jay Martin ("1 Corinthians 13 Interpreted by Its Context," *JBR* 18 [1950] 101-5), in an earlier and less rigorously argued article, also stresses the necessity of interpreting 1 Cor 13 in the context of the Corinthian letter setting the whole of 1 Cor 13 in opposition to the problem of glossolalia at Corinth. Several scholars (Hans Conzelmann, *I Corinthians* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975] 217; Héring, *I Cor.*, 134; Sanders, "Interpretation," 181-2) still see the transitions from ch. 12 to 13 and from ch. 13 to 14 as difficult. This problem led some to question the Pauline authorship of 1 Cor 13 (For references see Sanders, "Interpretation," 159 and Miguens, "1 Cor 13:8-13," 79). Both Miguens and Sanders point out, however, that the present consensus is that the chapter is the work of Paul and must be understood in relation to 1 Cor 12 and 14.

⁹⁶ "The Literary Structure of Paul's Hymn to Love," *JBL* 50 (1931) 268, 273-276. Lund's analysis arranges the corresponding parts of the paragraph as follows:

- A vs 8a
- B vs 8b
- C vss 9-10
- D vs 11
- C' vs 12
- B' vs 13a
- A' vs 13b

⁹⁷ Johannes Weiss (*Earliest Christianity*, II [New York: Harper, 1937] 411) regards antithesis as perhaps the most distinctive characteristic" of Paul's style. "We may say, perhaps with some exaggeration, that all his speaking and thinking has an antithetical rhythm in it."

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Future</i>
		A. Love never fails.
B.	But whether there be prophecies, whether there be tongues, whether there be knowledge,	they shall be set aside, they shall cease it shall be set aside.
C.	For we know fragmentarily and we prophesy fragmentarily;	but when perfection comes, that which is fragmentary will be set aside.
D.	When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child;	when I became a man, I set aside the things of a child.
E.	For now we see in a mirror enigmatically, now I know fragmentarily,	but then face to face;
		but then I shall (fully) know just as also I was (fully) known.
F.	But now faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. ¹⁰⁰	

The statement, “Love never fails,” sets up the overall contrast in the paragraph between love and the various gifts.¹⁰¹ Antithesis B picks up the concrete problem at Corinth by setting forth the temporary nature of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge, all of which were gifts greatly honored by a segment of the Corinthian congregation.¹⁰² Antithesis C strengthens the preceding statement by setting up a contrast between the fragmentary (*to ek merous*) nature of the present

¹⁰⁰ All scripture translations are my own.

¹⁰¹ *Agapē* has already been contrasted with *gnōsis* at 8:1.

¹⁰² See chs 8, 12, and 14.

gifts¹⁰³ and the state of perfection (*to teleion*) which is to come. Antithesis D is an illustration standing at the center point of the paragraph.¹⁰⁴ Paul compares the present fragmentary prophecy and knowledge of God to the thought and speech of a child which is set aside when the child becomes mature. Antitheses C and D are closely related. Both have the same form. There is first a statement of what constitutes the fragmentary state, then a statement about moving beyond the fragmentary, followed by a closing statement about setting aside the fragmentary condition consequent to the new condition beyond it. "Becoming a man" (vs 11) in the illustration corresponds to the coming of "perfection" (vs 10). Likewise, "setting aside" (*katērgēka*, vs 11) the "things of a child" corresponds to the fragmentary state "being set aside" (*katargēthēsetai*, vs 10).

The meaning of 13:10 and 13:12 has posed major questions for the exegesis of this paragraph. The problem in 13:10 is the intended meaning of *to teleion*. John R. McRay has identified four different explanations which have been given to the term: (1) the canon of the New Testament; (2) the perfect unity of the church; (3) the perfection of the individual in terms of sinlessness; and (4) the perfection of heaven itself. He himself argues, on the analogy of Eph 4:13, that the word refers to the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church.¹⁰⁵ Robert L. Thomas sums up the various interpretations of the term in two categories—(1) the canon view and (2) the *parousia* view—and proposes a third, the body view, in which he refers to *teleion* to the developing maturity of the church as a whole which reaches completion at the *parousia*.¹⁰⁶ Nils Johannsson adds yet another interpretation to the

¹⁰³ Only knowledge and prophecy are mentioned from this point on in the paragraph. Some (see Johannsson, "I Cor 13 and 14," 383) see the primary problem at Corinth to be center in *gnōsis* and 1 Cor 13 to be dominated by a polemic against *gnōsis*. Lund ("Literary Structure," 175-6) suggested that 13:11 might be an implicit reference to the problem of tongues. He compares 14:19, 20 with 13:11 pointing out the close verbal correspondences and concluding that "Paul regards the use of tongues in public as a state of childhood, while to speak with the understanding (probably equal to prophesy, cf. 14:3, 4) is a sign of manhood." He suggests that the fact that Paul does not mention tongues directly but by implication "is merely a gracious way of permitting his adversaries—who in this case are not regarded as enemies but as brethren—to draw their own conclusions as to the real value of the tongues, which they so greatly coveted for themselves and for others."

¹⁰⁴ See Lund's chiastic scheme in note 6 above. Conzelmann (*I Cor*, 226) notes that "the antithesis between child and man is a standard rhetorical theme."

¹⁰⁵ "To *Teleion* in I Corinthians 13:10," *Restoration Quarterly* 14 (1971) 168-183.

¹⁰⁶ "Tongues . . . Will Cease," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 17 (1974) 81-89.

term by identifying *to teleion* with the *agapē* discussed in 1 Cor 13.¹⁰⁷ The major Greek Fathers understood the term eschatologically.¹⁰⁸

The problem in 13:12 has been the meaning of “seeing in a mirror” and the question of the intended object of the verb “to know.” Miguens has given sharp focus to the problem in vs 12 by challenging the general assumption that both “seeing” and “knowing” in the verse have God as the understood object. His conclusion is that both the “seeing” and “knowing” should be taken to refer to an “understanding of the Christian faith or mysteries.”¹⁰⁹

I shall argue that the two verses (13:10, 12) are very closely related in the structure of the paragraph and that the contrast in both is between the present imperfect understanding of God and the perfection of that knowledge which awaits the believer at the end.

Before discussing the structure of these verses, it is first necessary to examine the point of reference for Paul’s figurative statement, “Now we see (*blepomen*) in a mirror (*di’ esoptron*) enigmatically (*en ainigmati*), but then face to face.” I take Paul’s figurative statement to have reference to the activity of Christian prophets.¹¹⁰ The three key terms (*blepein*, *esoptron*, and *ainigma*) can all be linked with prophetic activity. While *blepein* is not the most common word used of a prophet in the LXX, it is used. It occurs in the statement in 1 Sam 9:9, “Come, let us go to the seer (*ton bleponta*), for the people formerly called a prophet the seer (*ho blepōn*).” It is also used in reference to a prophetic vision in the question, “What do you see (*blepeis*)?” (Amos 8:2; Zech 4:2, 5:2; and Ezek 13:3, 6).¹¹¹

The term “mirror” cannot be linked with prophetic activity in other places in Biblical literature.¹¹² Kittel calls attention, however, to the use of the word “mirror” by the Rabbis to refer to the prophets’ vision of God.¹¹³ Spicq points to a similar usage of mirror imagery in the Hellenistic world. In Plato the mirror is interposed between the reality

¹⁰⁷ “I Cor 13 and ‘14,” 389-90.

¹⁰⁸ See for ex., Origen, *Comm. Jn.* X. 27; Eusebius, *H.E.* V.xvii.4; Basil, *Ep. CCXXXIII*.

¹⁰⁹ Miguens, “1 Cor 13:8-13,” 81-87.

¹¹⁰ So also Kümmel in his revision of the commentary of Hans Lietzmann, *An die Korinther I, II* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1969) 189; and Kittel, “Ainigma,” *TDNT* 1 (1964) 178-80.

¹¹¹ *Blepein* is used of a seer in Sophocles, *OT* 747.

¹¹² *Esoptron* occurs elsewhere in the LXX and NT only at Wis 7:26, Sir 12:11, and Jas 1:23. The synonym *katoptron* occurs only at Exod 38:26.

¹¹³ *TDNT* I, 178-9.

and the eye and becomes a symbol of the indirect vision. This Platonic use of the mirror imagery was common in the Hellenistic popular philosophy and can be found in the writings of Plutarch and Philo.¹¹⁴

The word *ainigma* was used in secular Greek literature to refer to symbolic communication whether by word or vision. Kittel notes that the word was commonly used of oracular or prophetic pronouncements which often took the form of riddles.¹¹⁵ Robert Grant shows that those who transmitted myths were commonly regarded to speak enigmatically. "Plutarch (*Pyth.* 407b), Celsus (Origen, *C. Cels.* 6.42), Maximus of Tyre (Diss. 4.5a, Hobein), and Porphyry (*De Styge ap. Stob. Ecl.* 2.1.19) state that enigmas are characteristic of ancient poets and oracles."¹¹⁶ Philo used the word of dreams which had to be interpreted (*Somn.* 2.3, 4).

It is probable that Paul's statement in 1 Cor 13:12 was inspired by the statement about Moses in Num 12:6-8.¹¹⁷ There the Lord says that he will be known to other prophets by a vision (*horamati*) or dream (*hyponō*). With Moses it will be different. "I will speak to him mouth to mouth, in my own likeness (*en eidei*) and not enigmatically (*di' ainigmatōn*)."¹¹⁸ Bassett said of these verses:

The *ainigmata* through which Jehovah talks with other prophets are visions and dreams—here again *ainigmata* refers, to some degree at least, to the phenomena of sight, rather than of speech. Dreams and visions are difficult to understand, it is true, but nevertheless they impart the truth, for the prophet's vision or dream reveals to him the word of God, though wrapped in figurative language and expressed in pictures. The chief point of the passage is that other prophets see Jehovah only in an image; Moses sees him as he is.¹¹⁹

The cumulative evidence of prophetic activity associated with the key terms in 1 Cor 13:12a makes it fairly certain that Paul had prophetic activity in mind when he made the statement. This conclusion is confirmed by the structure of the paragraph. Vs 12a, "For now we see

¹¹⁴ *Agapē*, 98-100.

¹¹⁵ *TDNT I*, 178.

¹¹⁶ *The Letter and the Spirit* (New York: Macmillan, 1957) 120.

¹¹⁷ Tertullian (*Adv. Prax.*, 14) was probably the first to make a connection between Num 12:6-8 and 1 Cor 13:12. See Lund, "Literary Structure," 274; Miguens, "1 Cor 13:8-13," 86; Conzelmann, *I Cor.*, 227; and Samuel E. Bassett, "1 Cor. 13:12, *blepomen gar arti di' esoptrou en ainigmati*," *JBL* 47 (1928) 235.

¹¹⁸ Bassett, "1 Cor 13:12," 235-6.

in a mirror enigmatically," corresponds with vs 9b, "We prophesy fragmentarily." Vs 12b, "Now I know fragmentarily," in turn corresponds with vs 9a, "We know fragmentarily," yielding the following chiastic scheme:



Lund, who made the same observation, said, "The inversion ... is a device by which the two sections are knit together and their literary relation is set off."¹¹⁹ This chiastic structure which relates the verses on each side of vs 11 to one another ties the central section of the paragraph (vss 9-12) together very tightly.¹²⁰

The parallel relationship between the first half of antitheses C and E suggests that the second half of these antitheses should be considered as parallel also. The *hotan* ("when") clause in vs 10 should be taken to have reference to the same time as the two *tote* ("then") clauses in vs 12. Likewise, the setting aside of the fragmentary (vs 10) should be equivalent to seeing face to face and knowing fully (vs 12). I shall approach the meaning of these clauses by attempting to establish the understood object for the verb "to know" in vs 12.

Since Miguens has argued so strenuously against taking God as the understood object of the verb "to know" in vs 12 and since that is the object I think Paul intended, I must engage in debate with his most important arguments at this point. Two points are crucial for the argument: (1) the object of "knowing" in 1 Cor 8:1-2, and (2) the understood agent of the passive verb of knowing at the end of 13:12 and its relation to the other two verbs of knowing in that verse.

Miguens notes that it is only at 1 Cor 13:12 and 8:2 that Paul unquestionably uses the verb "to know" absolutely. At 8:2, he states, there is little doubt that "'to know' is the same thing as 'to have *gnōsē*'."¹²¹ I think this is a correct identification. I differ with him, however, on the content of the knowledge Paul intends. If the immediate context of these verses is allowed to define the meaning of "knowing" and "having knowledge," then Paul is speaking about the elementary knowledge that God is one. It was precisely on the basis of this knowledge of God that some of the Corinthians were justifying their participation in the pagan feasts at Corinth (8:4-6). Paul counters

¹¹⁹ Lund, "Literary Structure" 274.

¹²⁰ See Lund's chiastic structure above, note 6.

¹²¹ Miguens, "1 Cor 13:8-13," 81.

this justification by saying that not all have knowledge (8:7a),¹²² i. e., this special understanding of the oneness of God. All who were Christians would, of course, have the intellectual knowledge that there is one God, but if they had only recently been converted to this view from polytheism, their consciences may not yet have fully adjusted to what they had accepted intellectually. It is especially noteworthy that Paul shows a great concern in this section for the conscience of the weaker brother (8:7, 10: 12; cf. 10:25-29). In this light it is highly ironic when Paul states in 8:10-11 that one who participates in the pagan feasts on the basis of his knowledge of God (8:10) is, in fact, canceling the work of God by his knowledge (8:11). This content of *gnōsis* as the elementary knowledge of God¹²³ also fits the stage of spiritual infancy that Paul judged the majority of Corinthian Christians to be in when he wrote his epistle (1 Cor 3:2).

The Achilles' heel in Miguens' argument for rejecting God as the understood object of the verbs of knowing in 13:12 is his failure to see the relationship between the agent of the passive verb "to be (fully) known" and the object of the active verbs of knowing in the same verse. He correctly notes that God must be the agent of the passive verb of knowing in 13:12 and says, "not only is this the normal meaning of such passive forms, but the parallel passages of 1 Cor 8:3 and Gal 4:9 prove it."¹²⁴ He fails to note, however, that those same parallel passages show the agent of the passive verb being the *object* of the active verb (to know, Gal 4:9; to love, 1 Cor 8:3) in the preceding clause. It is this correlation between agent and object which ties the two clauses together.

Paul is saying in 13:12 that the present visionary activity of the prophets will give way to face to face encounter and the present fragmentary knowledge of God will be replaced by full knowledge.¹²⁵ This is the perfection (*to teleion*) which will replace what is fragmentary (*to ek merous*, 13:10).

At 13:13 Paul returns to the present time ("but now") and states that throughout the period of this life faith, hope, and love continue,

¹²² The article with *gnōsis* here may point back to vss. 4-6 as the content of the term.

¹²³ S. Scott Bartchy (*First-Century Slavery and I Corinthians 7:21*, SBL Dissertation Series 11 [Missoula, Montana, 1973] 128) understands the content of *gnōsis* in 1 Cor 8 in a similar way.

¹²⁴ Miguens, "1 Cor 13:8-13," 92.

¹²⁵ See Lietzmann, *An die Kor*, 66.

and of these three, love is the greatest.¹²⁶ I take the “now” to be temporal in contrast to the last “then” of vs 12.¹²⁷ The verb “remain” (*menei*) certainly does not necessitate an eternal remaining, for Paul uses it repeatedly in 1 Cor 7 to urge the Corinthians to continue in their present condition whether that be unmarried, married, slave, or free (7:8, 11, 24, 40).

Miguens has called attention to some important points in relation to Paul’s statement that love is superior to faith and hope.

He is not theorizing about an abstract evaluation of faith, hope, *agapē*; he is dealing with factual problems and with practical life. . . . Vs 2 helps: faith is very important, but even in its highest degree and perfection is nothing without *agapē*. . . . It is Paul who in Gal 5:6 maintains that faith itself is ‘activated through *agapē*’ (cf. vs 13). This is, after all, what he stresses both in 1 Cor 8:1-13 . . . , and in Rom 14:13-23 (cf. Eph 3:19). The superiority of *agapē* Paul speaks about is practical, and consists in the fact that it is *agapē* which drives faith itself into proper deeds: Paul links ‘the work of faith and the toil of *agapē* very tightly (1 Thes 1:3).¹²⁸

I would call attention also to the fact that the preceding paragraph (1 Cor 13:4-7) closes by listing “believing,” “hoping,” and “enduring” as qualities of love.¹²⁹ Taken in the context of the whole of ch. 13 in which every Christian virtue and gift listed is nullified if love is lacking, the statement that love is greater than faith and hope is easily understandable.

1 Cor 13:8-13 in Relation to the Corinthian Problem

It is generally accepted today that some of the Corinthians had a realized eschatology. They believed that they were already experiencing all the promises in Christ.¹³⁰ They did not believe there would be a

¹²⁶ See Conzelmann, *I Cor*, 229-30 for other places where Paul uses the formula faith, hope, and love. Reitzenstein (see Sanders, “Interpretation,” 186) suggested that this was a formula of Paul’s opponents at Corinth and originally contained also the word *gnōsis*.

¹²⁷ Spicq (*Agapē*, 105) also takes it in this way. For the alternative ways both “now” and “remain” have been taken, see Conzelmann, *I Cor*, 230-1.

¹²⁸ Miguens, “1 Cor 13:8-13,” 93-4.

¹²⁹ Conzelmann (*I Cor*, 224) also notes this. I accept Héring’s suggestion (*I Cor*, 141) that the accusatives (*panta*) in 13:7 be taken as expressing “the absence of all limits” and understood in the sense, “at all times.”

¹³⁰ So Conzelmann, *I Cor*, 87-8; Wayne Meeks, *The Writings of St. Paul* (New York: Norton, 1972) 24, 29; Robert M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1972) 204-5; Ernst Käsemann, “On the Subject of Primitive Christian Apocalyptic,” *New Testament Questions Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) 125-6; Darrell J. Doughty, “The Presence and Future of Salvation in Corinth,” *ZNW* 66 (1975) 74-90.

future resurrection (1 Cor 15:12).¹³¹ On the basis of this realized eschatology, they regarded themselves as already filled, already rich, and already ruling (1 Cor 4:8). They considered themselves to be on a spiritual level at which they could disregard sexual immorality (1 Cor 5:1, 2; 6:12, 13) and conjugal relationships (1 Cor 7:1-5). They could even participate in idolatrous feasts with no danger to their spiritual well-being (1 Cor 8-10).

I think it is probable that the Corinthians also regarded the charismatic activity they were experiencing as evidence of their exalted spiritual state. They absolutized their present level of knowledge of God and regarded their glossalalia and prophecy as the ultimate revelation about God. Paul, however, labels everything the Corinthians are experiencing as fragmentary and temporary and reminds them that the state of perfection lies in the future. Even the prophecy which he recommends in ch 14 is fragmentary and imperfect. Only "love never fails."

1 Cor 13:8-13 anticipates in many respects what Paul says more explicitly in 1 Cor 15. At the end (*to telos*) Christ will deliver the kingdom to God when He has abolished/set aside (*katargēsē*) all rule, authority, and power (15:24) and *God will be all in all* (15:28). The strong eschatological emphasis of 1 Cor 13:8-13 was a necessary corrective for the Corinthian theology.

¹³¹ Jack H. Wilson ("The Corinthians Who Say There is No Resurrection of the Dead," ZNW 59 [1968] 90-107) reviews the interpretations which have been given to this verse. He takes it to refer to the Corinthians' denial of a future resurrection of the dead, though he does not see their view to be the result of a realized eschatology.

THE RESTORATION OF MAN

by Fred P. Thompson, Jr.

Artemus Ward once said that everybody has as much human nature as everybody else, if not more. That would seem to be a safe statement even for a theologian to make. The only problem it raises is what this nature is that everybody has in equal proportion. Is there in fact a human essence which can be discerned, specified and agreed upon?

Currently, traditional understandings of man are undergoing serious criticism both within and outside the Christian community. Jean Paul Sartre, who has never been a candidate for priesthood, is among the secular philosophers who deny that there is "a universal essence that can be called human nature." Man is not a creature programmed by his instincts and locked into a fixed destiny by a genetic code. He is, rather, capable of being what he wills to be, of deciding what to value, what course to follow in life. "Man is nothing else but what he makes himself."¹³²

A similar opinion was expressed in Renaissance Italy by Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, erudite philosopher-theologian who died in 1494 at the age of thirty-one. Pico represents God as speaking to man:

We have given to thee, Adam, no fixed seat, no form of thy very own, no gift peculiarly thine, that thou mayest feel as thine own, have as thine own, possess as thine own the seat, the form, the gifts which thou thyself shalt desire. A limited nature in other creatures is confined within the laws written down by Us. In conformity with thy free judgment, in whose hands I have placed thee, thou art confined by no bounds; and thou wilt fix limits

¹³² Quoted in Roger Shinn, *New Directions in Theology Today, Vol. VI, Man: The New Humanism* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968) 133.

of nature for thyself . . . Thou, like a judge appointed for being honorable, art the molder and maker of thyself; thou mayest sculpt thyself into whatever shape thou dost prefer.¹³³

Joseph Haroutunian, late Professor of Theology in the University of Chicago Divinity School, contended vigorously against the notion that human nature is a complex of rational endowments conferred on the individual at birth making him the being he ostensibly is. This view assumes that each person is pre-shaped to a mold chosen for him before his own volition was operative. Haroutunian argued instead that human nature is formed in a societal context, that our life-together in community with other persons is seminally significant in giving content and texture to our lives. We are not solitary creatures. We exist and survive and flourish only as members of one another, contributors to and beneficiaries of the common life of humankind.

On the other hand, Martin D'Arcy, contemporary Jesuit scholar, warns against stressing dynamism and change so strenuously as to trample into the dust the fact that man is a being, an existence which has an identifiable essence. Man becomes in virtue of his interaction with other persons, but he remains man. The being of man is his unique nature in comparison with all other creatures.¹³⁴

In recent years anthropological studies have almost been preempted by the life- and social-sciences. Zoological descriptions of *homo sapiens* are relatively easy to construct. One simply compares this human animal with non-human animals. In the age of B. F. Skinner it is fashionable to define man in terms of his behavior. A man is what he does. Sociologists are fond of categorizing people according to race, politics, religion, economics, etc., suggesting that something important has been revealed about man's nature in the process. A man is known by reference to the societies in which he participates.

I do not mean to imply that the scientific study of human life is illegitimate or inconsequential. On the contrary, life on this planet would be of measurably inferior quality, for all of us in the Western world, without the cultural and technological contributions of academy and laboratory. The fruits of sophisticated investigation and research are sweet indeed. It is a pity that the third world peoples have so little awareness of them—but that is the other side of the coin and comes

¹³³ *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, translated by Charles Glenn Wallis, quoted in Shinn, *New Directions*, 132.

¹³⁴ See *Humanism and Christianity* (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1969) 15-16.

close to the heart of the human problem, sin. But before we look at man as sinner we must consider him as creature of God.

Ontological Man

The doctrine of man belongs properly not to the anthropological disciplines but to theology. We can know what human life was intended to be only by revelation. Alexander Pope was right in his assertion that the proper study of mankind is man. What Pope did not say is that the specific man commanding our consideration is Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus Christ is God's definition of man. In the Word made flesh God reveals the quality of being He designed man to exhibit. The Christian understanding of man is therefore Christologically determined.

Jesus is confessed in the New Testament documents as Word, Lord, Son of God, God. The epistle to the Hebrews uses the language of deity generously to establish the divine origin of the revelation communicated through Jesus. All previously spoken revelational words, given through prophets, must now be heard in the light of the final word spoken in God's Son who is "the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance." (Heb 1:3 ASV). In the Gospel of John the Logos is simply identified with God. (John 1:1). I take this to mean, along with Karl Barth, that Jesus Christ is "the divine, creative, reconciling, redeeming Word which participates without restriction in the divine nature and existence, the eternal Son of God." (*Church Dogmatics*, 1, 2, p. 132). At the same time this eternal Person is declared to have become a temporal flesh-and-blood man. (John 1:14).

A similar Christology is set forth in the remarkable hymn of Philippians 2:5-11. Three affirmations are made in this text concerning Jesus: (1) His essential being in the *morphé* of God, (2) His subsequent acceptance of human nature, (3) His final exaltation as Lord of the universe. Equality with God, equality with men, equality with God again. The Ephesian epistle also contains a statement reflecting the descent-ascent motif in a Christological, as well as an ecclesiological, context.

That Jesus Christ is true man is an irrefragable dogma of Christian faith. Both Lordship and discipleship are established by His humanity, given His coequality with God. We confess Him as Lord because, being who He is, Jesus has been subjected to the same trials which distress the whole human family. He has walked the hard places of earth and has not whimpered. His sufferings neither embittered Him nor broke

His spirit. Like us, He knew loneliness, endured misunderstanding, suffered undeserved abuse, grieved at personal rejection, wondered if His Father had abandoned Him. Unlike us, He never permitted hard circumstances to affect His relationships to friends or enemies, never resorted to self-defense, never compromised His own integrity, never ceased to do His Father's will. As Barth notes, Jesus does what we omit; He omits what we do. (*Church Dogmatics*, I,2, p. 155)

In light of these considerations we are now prepared to examine the affirmation of Gen 1:26, 27 that man was created in the "image" of God. This surely means, as Calvin clearly saw, that we cannot know ourselves truly unless we know God. (*Institutes*, I. 1.2.) Anthropology is dependent on theology. This is why it is right to start our investigation into human nature by attending to the Biblical witness to the Word of God. God revealed Himself in Jesus. He revealed man as well. The "imago Dei" is also the "imago hominis." God is the mirror in which we see our created likeness.

If, as Gerhard von Rad thinks, Ezek 1:26 ff. is "the theological prelude to the *locus classicus* for the *imago* doctrine in Gen 1:26," our insistence on the Christological criterion receives confirmation.¹³⁵ Ezekiel's vision has the transcendent throne of the deity occupied by one in the "likeness as it were of a human form." A few sentences further on this figure is clearly revealed as God: "Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking." (Ezek 1:28b, RSV). The prophet sees more, probably, than he is able to comprehend of the nature of Divine-human communication. God speaks with a human voice to creatures made in His image. And His word is light, life and judgment for mankind.

God's image in man confers the ability and necessity for the creature to respond to the Creator. Man is the creature to whom God speaks. No greater dignity can be claimed or desired than this. Israel's finest poet was enthralled by this kind of attention paid by God to man. "When I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which thou has ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man that thou visitest him?" (Ps 8:3, 4, ASV). The writer of the New Testament epistle to the Hebrews shows the Christological reference of the psalm. But the psalm also sheds light on the ontology of man.

¹³⁵ *Old Testament Theology*, translated by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) I, 146.

Man is that being, alone of all terrestrial inhabitants, whom God comes to, speaks to, makes covenant with, offers Himself for. Thus man's life is from beginning to end dependent upon the grace of God and responsive to the word of God. Human nature, if one may responsibly use this term, is established by the Word, the Logos. It has no autonomous existence. Secular man is a myth, a shadow without substance. Human life may continue its movement about the earth in defiance of God or indifference to God, but not without God. In Him we live and move and have our being whether we be atheists or Pentecostals. Men have no other support, no alternative sources of breath and daily bread.

God makes man man by addressing him. He speaks to him as a creature who is able to hear and answer. No desultory and meaningless conversation takes place in the Divine-human encounter. The word of God is living, active, sharper than a double-edged blade, piercing to the marrow of our bones. It is a word which kills and makes alive, destroys and restores. Man cannot live by bread alone. He is fashioned to be nourished by every word which is uttered by the living God.

Words in themselves are miraculous things. Human words, the words you and I employ. They are not merely vocables launched into the atmosphere by action of diaphragm and larynx. They are messengers of brain and spirit producing physiological, emotional and intellectual effects upon those to whom they are spoken. Speech is the gift of God which empowers man to enter into the dynamic and dangerous mysteries of the Word. By its use he may bless or burn, enlighten or enrage, console or confuse his brothers and sisters. Seldom is man more Godlike than when he lifts his voice in eloquent exposition of truth. Seldom more demonic than when he uses words to wound and cripple another person made in God's likeness.

All words have a tendency to become flesh. Our words shape our attitudes and dispositions, and vice versa. We become what we say and think. (Thought, of course, has no definitive form or cognitive content until it becomes verbal). This is the reason for Jesus' strong language to those who accused Him of drawing healing power from Beelzebub: "I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Matt 12:36, 37). Character takes on the color and cast of language. We are what we speak. This observation has profound implications for "confessing" with our mouths Jesus as Lord.

To hear and obey the words of Jesus is to recognize in Him the archetypical man, as well as the Son of God. Authentic manhood manifested in Christ is acknowledged in faithful commitment to discipleship in His name. All who hear the Word spoken in this Man are drawn to follow Him as the exemplar of genuine humanity. Words and deeds are integrated in the lives of Jesus' disciples and the *imago dei* becomes in them more clearly visible.

God created man to be custodian, gardener, lover of the good earth. This assignment constitutes a facet of man's likeness to his Maker. God creates — man tends creation. His responsibility is to prevent vandalism on the planet, the despoliation of the human habitat. Earth is Divinely constituted to yield its harvest for the human community charged with its care.

Limited sovereignty over the non-human elements in this world links man to God in the conservation of all created things. Nothing God makes may be treated indifferently by the children of God. One measure of manhood is surely a stubborn resistance to every development in the history of the race which pollutes, scars or destroys any aspect of the mundane space given us by a gracious Creator. Our global stewardship is rendered by grateful men who give thanks to God in word and life for His spendid gifts.

Man was not engineered for solitude. Atomistic concepts of human nature must always be seen as inadequate in view of the fundamental sociality of his being. The Biblical story of creation shows the unity-in-plurality that is man from the beginning of his existence. Adam was incomplete as a person made in God's image until Eve was given to him. These two, the original community, constituted "man." God's order for the human family was established.

This creation story strongly suggests that man is not fully human in isolation. His life is linked with every other man's life in virtue of the fact that all are God's special creatures, designed to live in communication and interaction with each other. Cain's heretical complaint, voiced in the rhetorical question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" only serves to convict him of inhumanity. We are made to be keepers of each other, brethren in common need and offering common assistance.

Psychologically, men and women are structured for fellowship. Beyond language, an obviously social gift, we have other capacities and inclinations which speak of our interdependence. We are creatures who need to love and be loved, to share joy and sorrow, to protect and defend, to offer mutual aid. In each instance persons other than ourselves are required to make the transactions possible. The satisfactions of personal achievement are heightened by the approval and appreciation

of friends. They are greatly diminished if no one at all knows about them. Personal defeats can be devastating if we have to bear them alone; shared with a sympathetic friend they are not nearly so catastrophic.

All of man's scientific, artistic, academic and technological accomplishments have communal significance and impact. We are driven to create, to investigate, to build, by a desire to improve the human condition. Political artistry is developed in order that the quality of man's life in community with his neighbors may be orderly and mutually beneficial. Social experience is the very atmosphere in which human beings live.

Not only is this true from an external standpoint, it also applies to the development of personhood. One does not become a person by himself. We would remain mute and crippled if someone did not teach us to speak. All of our identifying characteristics as persons are created in *sympysis* with parents, siblings, friends. As Talcott Parsons has written, "... the main structure of personality is built up through the processes of social interaction. It develops through the internalization of social objects and of normative patterns governing the child's interaction in social situations."¹³⁶ Jacues Ellul may be added to the list of those objecting to radical individualism. "I do not believe there are many proponents left of the idea that man is something in himself, that he has an essence independent of his milieu."¹³⁷

Ontologically, then, man does not, cannot, stand alone. He can only become a person as a fellowman made in the image of the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Existential Man

Man as we observe him, and see him in ourselves, is a sinner. This is the existential reality that informs anthropology. He does not image forth the glory of God. He does not live with his fellow man in the beloved community so dear to the heart of the American philosopher Josiah Royce. He is not faithful to his own commitments "within the most intimate of his relationships. He violates his own integrity, break-

¹³⁶ *Social Structure and Personality* (New York: Free Press, 1964) 300.

¹³⁷ *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964) 393.

ing promises made by himself to himself and suffers in consequence thereof a guilty conscience.

It is unnecessary to speculate about the origin of this situation or to employ the language of theological schools to account for human sinfulness. "Original sin" and "the Fall" are terms we need not discuss. (Neither of them can be found in Scripture, anyhow). What does concern us is the universality of sin, the powerful pervasiveness of evil in the social order, and the prospects for improvement, if any. We will explore first the nature of sin.

Sin, in its generic dimension, is rebellion against God. We human creatures do not like being dependent, finite, restricted — so we declare independence. Forbidden fruit is irresistible. The knowledge of good and evil is infinitely to be desired. Autonomy and freedom are objectives for which we willingly sacrifice Paradise. For do not autonomy and freedom, on our own terms, constitute a fairer Paradise?

Defiance of God distorts the human perspective so drastically that no relationship escapes the consequent warping effect. Our self-image is so rosecolored that we live in constant bewilderment over our friends' failure to notice our shining virtues. On the other hand, we see our brothers through a glass, darkly. This clouded lens magnifies their warts and blemishes while concealing, in large part, their many merits. Mistrust and suspicion mar our associations. We are sure that our neighbors look for opportunities to cheat us. Piously, if not originally, we invoke the Satanic commandment: Look out for yourself, no one else will.

Ingratitude is a way of life to the sinner. He knows that there is a God who has created the universe and given him being. He knows that human existence is possible only because the Creator sustains His creation. But such considerations do not rise to the conscious level in his thinking nor impel him to give thanks. He presumes on the goodness of God. He assumes that day will continue to follow night forever, that springtime and harvest will dependably roll round to insure food for his family, that rain and sunshine will renew earth's *élan vital*.

Sinful man is equally cavalier about the benefactions he enjoys as a citizen of his state and municipality. Rarely is his voice raised about public affairs except in criticism of those who have undertaken civic responsibilities. Business and professional services are thoughtlessly received as merited rights. Gratitude is not the word to indicate his characteristic attitude toward those structures in the culture which make his way of life possible. Sin is knowing God and failing to recognize all His benefits. Sin is an unthankful heart.

Closely related to what has been noted in the foregoing remarks is the understanding of sin as hardness of heart. The Deuteronomic code contains an injunction on this point, warning the Covenant people against hardening their hearts and shutting their hands against the poor. (Deut. 15:7). Openness in the face of human suffering has always been a mark of the people of God. But there is another direction to which the Old Testament writings frequently point, that of the possibility of hardening one's heart against Yahweh. Perhaps Ps 95:8, 9 summarizes the Divine caution in this matter as well as any text: "Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers tested me, and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work" (RSV).

Jesus repeatedly collided with the intransigence of the Pharisees, most of whom showed little inclination to give Him a sympathetic hearing. Sharp words were spoken by Him because of their cool legalism. The Sabbath controversies may be taken as representative of the attitudes Jesus found in the hostile Pharisees. On one Sabbath day He healed a man with a withered hand and took the opportunity to chide the zealous separatists over their failure to recognize the priority of human need over Sabbath law. (Matt 12:9-14). All of God's laws are intended to minister to man, to be instruments of good to him. Legalism is evil precisely because it permits persons to ignore their brother's distress in the observance of religious technicalities.

In His emphasis on forgiveness Jesus spoke most vividly of the sin we term hardness of heart. His story of the two debtors is a brilliant and sobering parable on the kind of tender relationships which obtain in the Kingdom of heaven. The debtor whose debt was hopelessly beyond his ability to repay was freely and fully forgiven. His debt was cancelled. The second debtor owed a very small sum, about 20 dollars, to the man who had just been treated so generously. Now the shoe was on the other foot. The newly solvent servant demanded payment, refused to grant an extension of time on the note, and finally had the poor debtor remanded to prison until payment was made. Upon hearing of this callous action, the lord of the first servant summoned him into his presence, rescinded the pardon and had the loveless fellow thrown into jail. Jesus concludes the story, saying, "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." (Matt 18:23-35).

Prodigality, harlotry, greed, transgression of law—all of these Jesus could deal with in patience and understanding. For the genuinely penitent he had forgiveness no matter what sins they had done. Passionate

sinners were treated kindly. But Jesus had no welcome for the coldly calculating person who mistreated his brother and went on his way without a backward glance. When the springs of compassion dry up in the human heart only the demons can find shelter therein.

God seldom gives up on sinners. He knows that life teaches most of us that it is hard to kick against the goad. Sooner or later we are softened up by the blows of painful experience. The God's grace can reach us and redeem us. Unless, that is, we have hearts of stone. In that case, according to Jesus' word, God gives up and delivers us into prison until we make full restitution, a condition impossible to fulfil.

Sin betrays itself in attempts at self-justification. Self-justification is a form of selfishness which aborts every utopian scheme and dream of the social planners. No good society can be built on self-seeking individuals who subordinate the interests of the community to their own personal desires. Man is that animal who can assert his own right to happiness without regard to the condition of his neighbor. And he is ready to justify this self-serving spirit by reciting a respectable number of predictable rationalizations. He is the man who keeps his house heated in the winter to a cozy 78 degrees and cools it down to 68 degrees in the summer. He drives 70 miles and hour on the highways, owns and operates a recreational vehicle which consumes fuel like a jet aircraft, and keeps a high-powered motor launch moored at the nearest marina awaiting his next cruise on the lake. Gently mention the world-wide energy problem and he will sing you a melancholy song of troubles and problems which force him to use all the devices and appurtenances we have mentioned. It is enough to make you weep on his tailor-made silk suit.

Professor John McIntyre comments insightfully on this sinful self-orientation in his excellent book, *The Christian Doctrine of History*. McIntyre writes:

It was the honest recognition of this fact in human nature which shattered the tidy coherence of J. S. Mill's universal Utilitarianism. The Marxists use it to incite the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the capitalists, naively unaware that it is as likely to disrupt any proletariat community as it is to disrupt the present 'evil age.' The depth psychologists are acutely aware of its existence, but they seem to forget, if indeed they ever knew, that it is just as comfortably at home in the Super-ego as it is in the abominable Id, and that no amount of psychiatric alchemy can transform self-interest into altruism.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ *The Christian Doctrine of History* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1957) 29-30.

What to do about the ego-centric predicament remains a problem unsolved by human wisdom. Some efforts have been made to evade the difficulty however. Philip Rieff cites Spencer's prophecy of more than a century ago that evil and immorality would disappear from the earth. Rieff sardonically remarks that the prophecy is coming true, not because sin is declining but because "our culture is changing its definition of perfection."¹³⁹ If you can't eliminate the trouble re-define it and move along to other things. In a permissive self-centered society each man is free "to live an experimental life," as Rieff puts it.¹⁴⁰

Scholars representing the theology of liberation school are reminding us with great vigor that sin has two dimensions: rebellion against God and discrimination against the brother. Both movements of the sinful man are generated by an unhealthy self-concern. Gustavo Gutierrez, a Latin American theologian, feels deeply about the church's failure to speak out in behalf of the poor and oppressed. Referring to Gal 5:1, "For freedom Christ has set us free," Gutierrez comments:

St. Paul . . . refers here to liberation from sin insofar as it represents a selfish turning in upon oneself. To sin is to refuse to love one's neighbors and, therefore, the Lord himself. Sin—a breach of friendship with God and others—is according to the Bible the ultimate cause of poverty, injustice, and the oppression in which men live.¹⁴¹

The ramifications of these remarks are far-reaching, indeed. Gutierrez is calling us to remember the Bible's repeated entreaties to care for the poor in our midst. If the field is the world, evangelistically considered, is not our responsibility toward the hungry and the imprisoned a global responsibility? Can we refuse to consider it our concern when children starve in Sierra Leone, or when civil liberty is denied citizens of South Africa because of their color—and not thereby become sinners?

Sin is defiance of God. Sin is idolatry, accepting the penultimate as ultimate. Sin is self-exaltation. Sin is not caring about the neighbor, the other, wherever he lives. Sin is disrelation, individualism, refusal of fellowmanhood. Sin is a fatal disease, not a blemish, for which there is only one cure—the salvation offered by and in Jesus Christ.

¹³⁹ *The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) 8.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973) 35.

Eschatology

The *imago Dei*, being a reflective relationship of man to God, cannot be lost or destroyed by sin. It can be and has been badly disfigured by reason of man's idolatries. Human beings reflect their own loveless likenesses rather than the Spirit of God. Mankind has lost its ontological moorings and is wandering helplessly amidst the plenitude of sinful options offered up by the Adversary. Novelties lure, then pall, and finally disgust the starless pilgrims. Nothing satisfies. Insisting on going his own way, man has found himself in a blind alley with no discernible way out. What hope is left for mankind in a century which has given us Hitler, Stalin, Chairman Mao, Idi Amin, television, pornography and a nuclear arms race which has eliminated physical security from the earth?

There is hope. Jesus came preaching the imminence of the Kingdom of God. The event of His entrance into the world of time marks the beginning of the last stage in the history of salvation. He brings the Kingdom—we do not build it. We are invited to enter, to become sons and daughters of the Kingdom. This Kingdom is the new age of mankind, the reign of God over subjects whose delight is to obey the Sovereign. Citizens of the Kingdom are redeemed men and women whose lives have been transformed by a God-Man who was crucified and raised from the dead through the power of the Father.

In that dramatic complex of events—death and resurrection—Jesus Christ opened up the future for the restoration of man and all things to God. The desperate nature of the human condition is evidenced by the Cross of Christ. God's economy wastes no pains. Jesus' death was essential to the redemption of sinners and the reconciliation of estranged mankind to God.

From the moment of Christ's resurrection all human life has stood under the symbolism of the Cross. The new being of man is created out of death—death to all that is under sentence of death. Sin, law and death have lost their tyrannical hold on the man freed from bondage by the self-giving of the resurrected Lord. In the Crucified men are free for the future of the Kingdom.

The nature of the Messianic Kingdom, as foreseen in Isaiah's prophecy (2:1-5), is expressed in peace and righteousness which actualize the will of God in the society of men. Injustice (unrighteousness) ceases when persons have been liberated from the bondage of self-service and preoccupation with worldliness. All men will know the Lord and seek to honor Him in obedient service.

It is important that this vision of the Kingdom not be referred solely to some transcendent dimension of space and time. Jesus patiently expected His disciples to order their lives *before the eschaton* by the truth He was revealing. No interim ethic is advocated in His teaching, but the permanent incorporation of the spirit of sacrifice and altruism. Rufus Jones, the most winsome Quaker thinker of the last generation, warned against postponing the implementation of Jesus' Kingdom message until after the Second Coming:

He did not propose to postpone the practices of the principles of the kingdom until it had finally come in its final triumph. If that course were pursued there would never be a kingdom. The way to bring it is to start courageously to be the kingdom so far as the person can reveal it. Instead of postponing it to a heavenly sphere or to a millennial dawn he boldly undertook to begin living the way of the kingdom.¹⁴²

The early Christians boldly followed their Master's lead. Careless of their own security, property, status, they formed communities in which persons were given priority over things. Love of brethren marked the quality of their life together. They refused to be owned by possessions so that they could be free to care for one another without distraction. Common life in the Body of Christ was shared by those who trusted Him for their salvation. Their lives were given to daily proclamation of the gospel and daily attention to one another's needs.

Is this picture not very near to what humanity should look like when it is restored to its original intention? Of course perfection was not reached by the early church. People are always in various stages of being redeemed. Maturity in Christ does not happen rapidly. Restoration is thus never a movement back but a movement forward into the future in the power and light of the primordial revelation given in Jesus Christ. We are summoned to restore what never was, except in the mind of God. Man has never been all God hoped for when He created him. This is why the eschatological hope of a new heaven and a new earth *wherein dwelleth righteousness* so powerfully attracts us. Ultimately God will be everything to everyone. Sin and death will be destroyed. Redeemed men will live in untroubled fellowship with each other and with the Lord.

Meanwhile, God calls us to be new men in our old world. The world needs God's saints. As Rosenstock-Heussly arrestingly said it, "We have to love the world because it is always at its wits' end."¹⁴³ Apocalyptic nightmares threaten. The serenity of those whose life-together in

¹⁴² Quoted in Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Christian Future* (Norwich, Vermont: Argo Books, n.d.) 68.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 70.

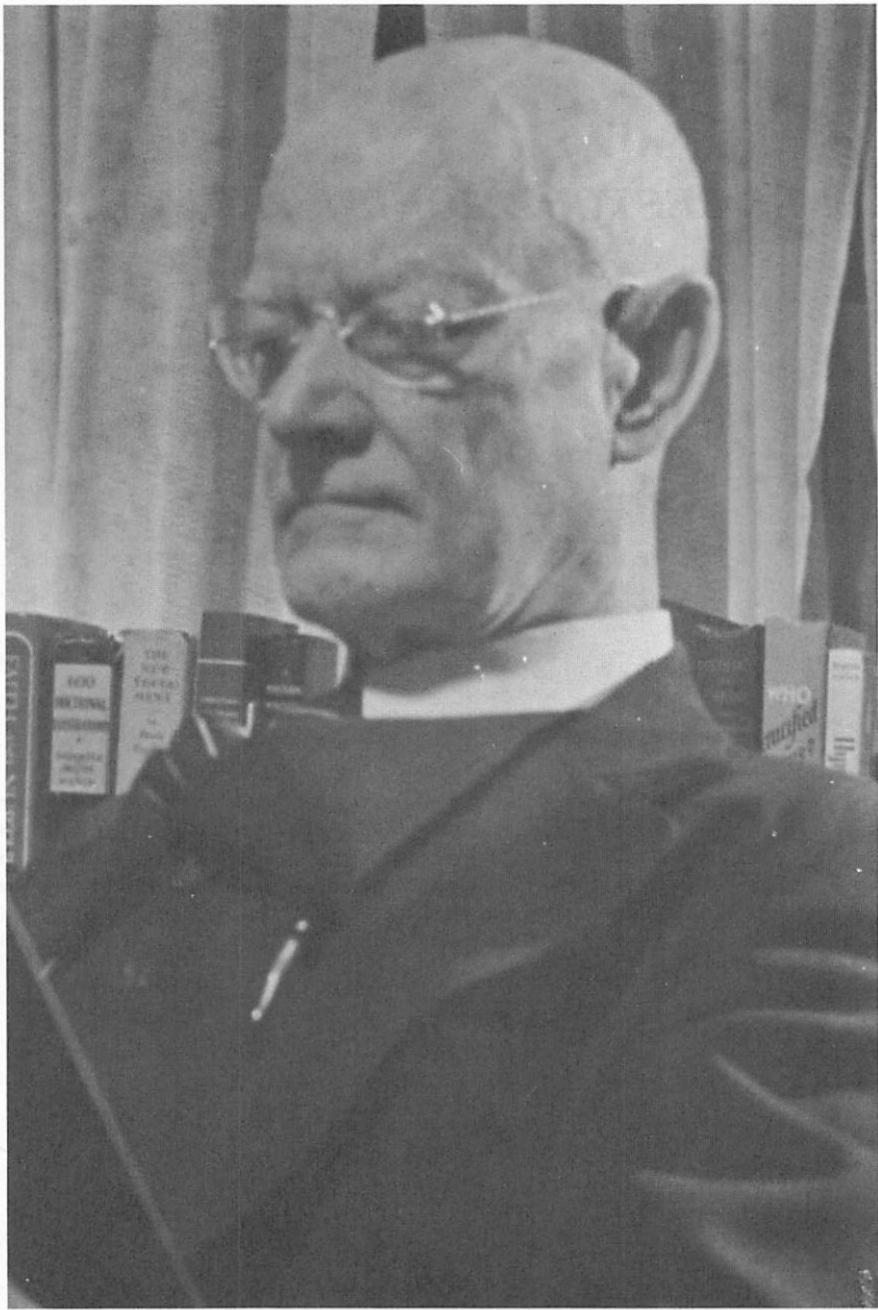
Christ indicates that they are sustained by something outside the existing order of things testifies to their recovery of that which is fundamental to authentic humanity—confidence in the God who creates and can destroy.

This side of the Cross transformed men live by its power. Renewed in mind and conformed to the image of the Divine Sufferer, they offer themselves as appropriate sacrifices to the glory of God and the reconciliation of sinners. Day by day the Spirit who lives in their midst impels them from one degree of glory to another. Forgiving one another, respecting one another, believing in one another they constitute a model for the entire family of man.

Fellowmanhood, in the image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, fulfils the meaning of human existence. Men were created for communion. Grace was given to enable fellowship to be preserved even though deep personal differences are present. Perfection, in the human sense, is not the absence of individual vices but the persistence of community among imperfect grace-filled persons. The impact of Jesus' resurrection on human existence is seen precisely at this point. To die and rise again with Christ is to walk to a different cadence, to dance to music unheard by mortals for whom death speaks the last rites. Only those whose lives are hid with Christ can answer the call of the Kingdom. These Christians are the new humanity, restored, and restoring the created order in their obedience to God.

III. RESTORATIONIST THOUGHT AND HISTORY*

*The following essays relate to the religious movement, begun in 18th century America, which is concerned to restore the universal church to the unity and spiritual authenticity of apostolic Christianity as reflected in the New Testament. Associated in the beginning with such figures as Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Stone, this "Restoration Movement" today is the heritage of three church groups, the independent Christian Churches, The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the independent Churches of Christ.



W. R. Walker

W. R. WALKER AND THE CHRISTIAN ASSIGNMENT

By Edwin V. Hayden

The *Christian Standard* for February 16, 1946, gave only modest, inner-page treatment to an equally modest essay by one of its more prominent writers, W. R. Walker. The author, then seventy-five years old and in the twenty-sixth year of his ministry with the Indianola Church of Christ in Columbus, Ohio, had recently preached a sermon that the Indianola folk had found unusually helpful, and he thought it might be equally helpful among the wider readership of *Christian Standard*. So he had gone home and typed up the gist of the sermon for publication. Titled "The Simplicity of the Christian Assignment," it tore away the complexities of manifold obligations and rested its case on the assignment made in a few plain directives from Jesus—notably the Great Commission. The Christian assignment, it said, comes from Jesus as Lord; we must avoid confusing assignments from other sources. The Christian assignment requires that we tell the world about Jesus so as to bring believers into an obedient relationship to Him, also that we "acculturate" believers as living persons into an increasing likeness and fruitfulness to Christ. We must avoid confusing additions to, or subtractions from, that assignment.

That sermon-essay, it seems to me, provides in its title and content a remarkably accurate key to understanding the life and ministry of W. R. Walker. No man exceeded him in a clear understanding and application of the bases and the boundaries of authorities and assignments. The authority—human or divine—that conveys an obligation may later change or cancel that obligation; no other authority can do so. And one's obligation to any authority can be discharged only by doing precisely what that authority directs—not something different or even something more, no matter how much better the alternative action may seem.

I learned this rather early in my twenty-some years' acquaintance with Brother Walker. As assistant minister in Canton First Church about 1940, I joined with him and others in a church planting venture we called "An Ohio Fellowship in Evangelism." Soon after we drafted the organizational documents we held a day-long promotional rally at Columbus. As secretary of the group I was asked to open the program with a presentation of "An Ohio Fellowship in Evangelism." I labored long and presented a theme-sermon that was designed to be Scriptural and inspirational. "You got us off to a great start!" praised one friend. But as the day wore on it became increasingly evident that many persons present had no clear idea of the design and proposals they were being asked to support. Afterward I said to Brother Walker, "If I had it to do over, I would set aside the sermon of the morning and simply read and explain our organizational document."

Without a trace of hesitation or rancor he responded, "That's what we intended when we gave you the assignment." My great sermon was a failure because it had not done the job to which I had been appointed. And W. R. Walker let me know it.

In his life course of almost ninety-four years, seventy of which were given to a restoration-oriented Christian ministry, Brother Walker came remarkably close to being able to say with his Lord, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4). He respected his assignment.

Before Indianola

Wilmer Russell Walker was born July 5, 1869, at Brooks, Iowa, within a brief period when the family was away from its home territory in Coshocton County, Ohio. His father, L. G. Walker, was a preacher and a blacksmith, a man of great strength and discipline in both professions. Wilmer's appreciation for, and shrewd judgment of, good horses began at his father's smithy. His mother, Matilda (Cooper) Walker, was a niece of the frontier novelist, James Fenimore Cooper.

An able student from his boyhood, Wilmer secured a teaching certificate at age sixteen from the college established by Henry Lehr at Ada, Ohio. The young Mr. Walker taught in the schools of Coshocton County for seven years, during which time he also read in the field of medicine under the tutelage of a local physician. He chose to be a doctor, but never ceased to be a teacher and something of a schoolmaster.

Married on September 19, 1893, to Ina May Day, of Tiverton Center in Coshocton County, he went directly with his bride to Angola, Indiana, to enroll as a medical student in Tri-State College. He became active immediately in the Angola church, teaching a Bible class of college students. In this he was so effective that the church folk urged him toward the preaching ministry. He finally yielded to their urging, but insisted, "I'll not preach until I have something to say!" For something to say, he transferred to Hiram College, Hiram, Ohio, as a ministerial student. Mrs. Walker never quite forgot that, having married a physician, she found herself the wife of a minister.¹⁴

At Hiram W. R. met a younger student, also from the college at Ada, by the name of P. H. Welshimer. He established a lifelong friendship and fellow-ministry with Welshimer. He graduated and was ordained to the ministry at Hiram in June of 1896. Early ministries occupied him at Chardon, Ohio, for two years; at Martinsburg, Ohio (where he also served the Bladensburg and Eden congregations) for three years; and at North Baltimore, Ohio, for one year. Many Christian churches in Knox and Licking counties trace their beginnings to evangelistic labors of L. G. and W. R. Walker, father and son.

Then for twelve years W. R. ministered at Killbuck, in Holmes County, serving also the church at nearby Glenmont and establishing a noteworthy congregation at Spring Mountain. Killbuck became a place of memories, as preacher and people established bonds that were to last for a lifetime. They say that neighbors, desiring to buy a horse, would get the preacher to find them a good one, also that his own buggy sped over the country roads behind one of the best. For his own five boys—Dean E., Errett, Barclay, Donald, and Waldo—he provided a "Trinket"—a pony that he brought home under the seat of his wagon. Trinket grew to be a notable and highly temperamental member of the family.

Walker family patterns were established early. Wilmer maintained for his Ina a devotion that needed few promptings from Ephesians 5:25 and that continued without abatement until her death in 1956. She in turn was proud of her husband and supported him, participating in the church services regularly but without prominence, while giving her principal attention to home and family. The boys addressed and referred to their parents as "Father" and "Mother," maintaining an almost reverential respect that survived wide differences in personality and viewpoint.

¹⁴ This and other personal recollections came from conversations with James and Edna Walker, grandson and granddaughter-in-law of W. R.

The family economy was sound, based on W. R.'s dictum, "Take care of the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." Small ventures in such agri-business as sheep-grazing on Holmes County hillsides helped the income. For her part Mrs. Walker was a genius at preventing waste. Food not eaten at one meal would come back later in some cleverly contrived cake, and everyone enjoyed it.

When the Fourth Constitutional Convention for Ohio was called in Columbus in 1912, the Holmes County folk said they wanted to send a delegate whom they could trust, so they chose the Christian preacher from Killbuck. For eight months of constitution writing, W. R. was in Columbus during the week, but in his Holmes County pulpits on Sunday.

In 1914 W. R. joined with his friend P. H. Welshimer in the Phillips Bible Institute, a preacher-training enterprise conducted in the facilities of First Christian Church, Canton. His three years teaching there helped to develop some remarkably fruitful ministries. When PBI moved to Valparaiso, Indiana, Professor Walker moved to Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia (he had earned a Master of Arts degree there in 1916), where he taught effectively during the turbulent years of controversy over the exposures of liberalism in the College of the Bible at Lexington, Kentucky.

Indianola, 1920-1948

When the Indianola Church of Christ in Columbus invited him to its pulpit in 1920, Mr. Walker accepted. He saw in the church's location near the campus of Ohio State University an opportunity to work with students in the context of a New Testament church. He was fifty-one years old when in September of that year he entered what was to be his longest and most fruitful ministry.

The Indianola church was itself seven years old and had a membership of about 150 when he came there. It grew steadily under a preaching, teaching, leading ministry. W. R. didn't say much about his love for the flock; rather, he demonstrated it by the way he served them, the way he respected them and they way he talked about them to others. They responded with a deep and lasting devotion.

Haste or pressure was no part of the program at Indianola. The preacher didn't talk a great deal in board meetings, but encouraged the leadership of others. Agreement in consensus, rather than a majority

vote in contest, was the rule for action. No major decision was made without unanimous consent at least among the elders.

Especially in the early years the "ministerial staff" at Indianola was the Bible-school leadership—the officers of the Bible classes, who were usually also officers in the church. They promoted attendance and cared for the members. W. R. used to say in reference to church-supported staff, "The janitor and I are the only drones around here."

But W. R. Walker was no drone. He knew his assignment (that school master's word again), and he discharged it faithfully and purposefully. He spent time in calling, especially on prospective members and potential leaders for the church. For effectiveness he depended on quality, rather than number, of calls. He used to say that if he could not bring a conversation to *his* subject—the purpose of the call—within five minutes he would excuse himself and go to another. He would try again later with the same person, but if after three attempts he could not get to *his* subject in a reasonable time, he would transfer his time and attention to other, more receptive and responsive prospects.

Even the vacations accepted by this preacher were related to what he considered the ministerial assignment. He would spend them at conventions, Christian assemblies, or at Bible colleges giving lectures. There was also an occasional day off for a family reunion.

In 1929-1930 he accepted an extracurricular assignment as chaplain of the Ohio House of Representatives in the capitol building at Columbus. (The extra income financed a ministry-enriching trip to Palestine for him and Ina in 1932.)

The Ohio legislators had been looking for some clergyman who was not looking for the honor of the position, and they found him at Indianola. "A lot of honors have come my way," he said in later years, "and I never sought one of them." That was true also when the Cincinnati Bible Seminary conferred on him a Doctor of Divinity degree and when Milligan College conferred a doctorate in Sacred Theology. He appreciated the honors, but he never used the titles.

The honors he most appreciated were such as came through the response of university students who grew into Christian leadership under his tutelage. Long before campus ministries became a recognized parachurch activity, the students' Bible class at Indianola, taught by W. R. Walker and averaging ninety in attendance, was rendering a

solid and effective ministry at Ohio State Uni-preacher-teacher gave major attention, preparing care that sometimes exceeded what he gave to hisiously prepared) sermons.

Yet in that class Mr. Walker boldly violated most of the canons more recently established in youth ministries. One leader in the Indianola church remembers that he first visited there as a university student invited by a fellow student to the preacher's Bible class. When he first saw the teacher—totally bald, bespectacled, and wearing a cutaway formal coat, he wondered, "What am I doing here?" But before the lesson was complete, he knew that he would be coming back for more.

In 1943, during the later days of World War II, Indianola's roster of members in military service included more than one hundred names, about one-third being commissioned officers, including a colonel. "In our church membership," Mr. Walker said, "we have at least a hundred with college or university degrees—and they are all loyal to the one faith and plea."¹⁴⁵

An Army captain whom W. R. had taught, baptized, and married, wrote to him from overseas:

I certainly enjoyed getting your nice long, newsy letter. Would rather hear one of your sermons now than a dozen of anyone else . . . I always liked your sermons because they were Scriptural; you knew your Bible and that's what you preached. Then I always admired your presentation. It was scholarly, logical, yet simple enough for even the smaller children to understand. But one of the things I always admired most about you was the way you could keep all the church factions running so smoothly. Every group seemed to think it was running its own ship of state, yet on each ship you were the rudder. We were one fleet . . . A thousand dollar flower wreath later could not let you know how thankful I am for such a counselor and friend.

¹⁴⁵ Letter to *Christian Standard*, February 19, 1943.

Continuing Ministry, 1948-1963

The Indianola church had approximately 1,600 members in 1948, when W. R. Walker, then seventy-nine years of age, concluded his twenty-eight year ministry and "changed his field of service." Harold W. Scott, who had worked for some years with Mr. Walker, succeeded him in the pulpit. W. R. would give his time to writing, also to lecturing, especially to ministerial students in Bible colleges.

He was well equipped for such a ministry, and well established in it. As a director, vice-president, and finally president of the Standard Publishing Company in Cincinnati, he supplied counsel that greatly encouraged and assisted the management in keeping Standard true to its original reason for existence as a servant of the restoration cause.

Mr. Walker had been writing rather frequently for *Christian Standard* and companion publications since 1915, when he was in Canton with the Phillips Bible Institute. Some eighty *Standard* articles and several books had come from his typewriter during the intervening one-third of a century. Now, within the first year after leaving the Indianola pulpit he provided a definitive series of articles on "The Christian Faith," which appeared in weekly installments in *Christian Standard*, April 2 through September 24, 1949. Soon thereafter he became a regular contributor of practical and doctrinal comments, first under the title, "Thinking it Through" (fourteen items, May 1950 through June 1951), and then in "The Counselor's Question Box" (183 appearances from 1951 through 1961).¹⁴⁶ The "Counselor" wrote in response to questions asked by readers. In this the Walker qualities came through at their best—perceptive understanding of the basic elements in a situation, and brief, incisive statement of reasons and conclusions. The "Counselor" appeared last in September 1961, some eighteen months before Mr. Walker's death.

The post-Indianola years saw also the publication of some two dozen miscellaneous articles, the last of which, "What the Lord's Supper Means to Me," appeared at Brother Walker's ninetieth birthday and was later printed as a tract.

¹⁴⁶ *Christian Standard Index 1866-1966* (Nashville, Tenn.: Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1967).

In refusing an editorial writing assignment in his ninety-second year, W. R. responded on February 4, 1961:

I wish I felt equal to the task of writing the article you have asked me to prepare on the "Christian Standard and the Restoration Movement," but there are limitations on my ability to do justice to such a statement.

My sight has failed to the point where I can read only the largest type . . . Also my memory is in the class of "the old gray mare."

To do justice to an article such as you desire necessitates both a dependable memory and ability to read. I am truly sorry, for I have been a dedicated believer in the *Standard* as the only publication which adequately presents the restoration cause for years . . .

Brother Walker typed (with remarkably few missed keys) and signed his own letter.

The post-Indianola ministry in lecturing and teaching was less fully realized. Mrs. Walker's health was declining even at the time W. R. left the pulpit; and for much of the next eight years, until her death, it was such that he left her for only brief periods—and finally not at all. He addressed the 1955 North American Christian Convention in a remarkable farewell under the assigned subject, "Thy King Commands." His declaration of Christ's authority rang clear; his personal word to the convention was sound and wise. With patriarchal courtesy he refrained from chiding the program committee for mixing King James English (*Thy*) with modern speech (*commands*) in making the assignment!

When P. H. Welshimer died two years later, W. R. addressed the funeral assembly, apparently without notes, in a masterful statement that was published from transcription, with almost no editorial adjustment, under the title, "The Man of the Larger Mold."¹⁴⁷

Having accomplished his desire to live and care for his beloved Ina as long as she needed him, W. R. found himself still prevented by his own integrity and the weight of years from accepting many speaking engagements. "I won't preach unless I have something to say," he had declared, and "When you stop studying, you are dead." Always an avid reader, following the latest developments in politics, science, philosophy, and economics, he became keenly aware of the limitations imposed by failing eyesight. "I won't bore people with platitudes and reminiscences," he insisted. On March 8, 1962, he said in a letter:

Near blindness has been averted by a successful cataract operation, but arthritis keeps reminding me of my age. For a year now, I have been wise

¹⁴⁷ *Christian Standard*, December 14, 1957.

enough to refuse calls to preach. Perhaps that decision was overdue, but it did come. I was tempted to break it recently when Harold Davis wrote me that the Canton church board wanted me to speak at the fiftieth anniversary of the dedication of their building, but my judgment defeated my desire.

He did make an exception, though. On the Lord's Day nearest to his birthday each year, including the ninety-third, he accepted the Indianola church's invitation to preach. Though he might be forgetful before he stepped into the pulpit on those occasions, and afterward he would be dull with exhaustion, the sermons themselves were masterfully clear and forceful in thought and delivery. For his last sermon at Indianola, July 1, 1962, he chose the same text he had used for his first sermon there in 1920: Philipians 2:5-11, with its conclusion, "Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord."

Even in those later years, when he chose to withdraw from the pulpit and the press, W. R. Walker conducted a ministering ministry. He would encourage others in their service to Christ and His church!

He wrote letters. Some, addressed to leaders among the brethren, mingled exhortation with encouragement. Others simply expressed appreciation and said, "Keep on keeping on." Several came to me as editor of *Christian Standard*. One of the last, typed by other hands when his could no longer find their way on the keyboard, went to Guy P. Leavitt, expressing Brother Walker's interest and encouragement in the work being done among the churches in Florida.

By choice W. R. attended church services in smaller congregations ministered to by younger men. Though he could not hear well enough to follow the sermon, he would speak appreciation and encouragement to the preacher before he left. This did not in any way contradict the severe criticisms he leveled at slipshod sermonizing or self-seeking professionalism in the pulpit. His purpose in both responses was to elevate the ministry.

His demeanor at home was aimed at the same goal. Each morning he would dress for the day in his dark suit with white shirt and dark tie. "Someone might come to see me today," he would say, "and whoever it is, I owe him at least that much respect."

W. R. Walker died February 2, 1963, in the seventh month of his ninety-fourth year. By his own directive a simple service was held at a Columbus mortuary. Nothing special was to be done, he insisted, in his honor. So the service was marked by depth of appreciation rather than by size or splendor.

Burris Butler, vice-president in charge of the editorial department at Standard Publishing, made a brief statement that was later published under the title, "The Brotherhood Is Indebted to W. R. Walker." He spoke of Brother Walker's notable contribution to a serving ministry, to preaching, to Christian education, to convention life, and to a publishing ministry. This statement echoed and extended a tribute paid fifteen years earlier, when Mr. Walker concluded his pulpit ministry at Indianola. At that time he was presented with a gold watch bearing this inscription:¹⁴⁸

Presented by
The Standard Publishing Company
to
W. R. Walker
Minister, Teacher, Author
in appreciation of his lifelong devotion
to the cause of
New Testament Christianity
August 29, 1948

Ministry

In all areas of his ministry W. R. Walker perceived the boundaries of his assignment as sharply defined. He was never bashful about specifying what was not, as well as what was, included. Clearly contrary to the Christian assignment as he understood it were these: the "liberalism" that vitiated the Bible and substituted social adjustment for conversion; the cultism that substituted some "new revelation" for the authority of Christ; the ecclesiasticism that hid Christ and his church behind the machinery of professional religionists; and the "Jesuit conscience" that would justify moral wickedness in a "good cause."

The fact that majority opinion might disagree with him in both what he included and what he excluded gave him no great concern. In fact he challenged majority opinion with statements such as these:

The Christian faith is a proselyting faith. Its founder demanded universal and exclusive acceptance of it. All other "faiths" were false.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Information supplied by Dean E. Walker, Milligan College, Tennessee.

¹⁴⁹ "The Propagation of the Christian Faith," *Christian Standard*, August 13, 1949.

Authority is a hard, heavy, resented word. Some would delete it from the religious vocabulary.¹⁵⁰

Yet that unpopular concept of authority—the authority of Christ over His church, and the authority of the congregation in church business—was central in his thinking. His emphasis on obedience was almost military; yet his concept of ministry saw it as a privilege—the privilege of sharing in service with and to Christ.

Jesus' own ministry, Mr. Walker insisted, was sharply defined and self-limited:

When we contemplate the infinite range of His knowledge, the limited area of His teaching is astonishing. . . . In all His teaching He made no reference to scientific truth, except to illustrate some phase of His kingdom. His ministry was devoted to just one theme: the contrasting facts of *sin* and *righteousness*. He never invaded any other realm of human interest. Religious and moral obligations monopolized His thought in speaking. He seems to have been concerned about one thing only so far as our race is concerned: to locate and apply the knife to sin. . . .

Jesus' sermons were always directed to the *inner life*. . . . He was more interested in one's attitude toward property than He was in its distribution. Preachers may find a lesson here . . . The minister who confines his labors to the task of showing the "dead" the way to "life" will be kept very, very busy, and will experience a joy in his ministry that is deep, rich, blessed. . . . No fact of New Testament teaching stands out more clearly than that, in Jesus' agenda, what we call "social service" was secondary and subsequent to discipleship.¹⁵¹

Brother Walker's concept of ministry excluded specifically and vigorously the professionalism of the "ecclesiastic" who sought honor and power in his position:

The minister is a subordinate: first, to Christ as Lord and Master; second, to the congregation. His special calling is to preach because, presumably, he can do that better than any other in the group. But that does not relieve him of other responsibilities which he can meet in a superior fashion. As servant of the church which supports him, he owes it all his time and talent, for both preaching the gospel and advancing the spiritual life and interests of the congregation in every possible manner.

¹⁵⁰ "Thy King Commands!" *Christian Standard*, June 18, 1955.

¹⁵¹ *A Ministering Ministry* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1938).

One thing is certain: the true minister of Christ is never a boss or dictator in the church he serves. He may be, must be, a leader who commands a following among the people; not because of his "official position," but because of his knowledge, wisdom, consecration, diligence in work, loyalty to Christ, and ability to do the things necessary to the success of the church.¹⁵²

The minister should be the busiest man in the church, but he should also be careful about *what* he is busy. . . . He may be as industrious as Solomon's ant in "serving" folk and interests to the neglect of his ministerial responsibility.¹⁵³

Brother Walker saw the preaching minister as sharing in service with others—notably elders, who bear pastoral (shepherdly) responsibilities:

The located minister, by mutual understanding and arrangement with the congregation, becomes an administrative member of the "pastors" or "elders" of a congregation, exercising the functions or performing the duties they may delegate to him. He acts in their behalf, and under their direction. So long as this simple concept of pastoral work obtains, there can be no danger of an ecclesiasticism maturing.¹⁵⁴

The elders themselves, he said, carry out their assignment under the ultimate authority of Christ and also under responsibility to the congregation which chooses them and can dismiss them:

The elder is a servant, not a boss. . . . A congregation not only has the right, but it is its duty, to remove a dictatorial, trouble-making elder from office. The authority to create postulates the authority control or remove.¹⁵⁵

Preaching

By practice and by precept W. R. Walker recognized the life and teaching of Jesus as the center and circumference of gospel preaching. After his death his sermon outlines came into the hands of his grandson, James Walker of Cincinnati. The grandson discovered in them testimony establishing two publicly affirmed convictions of the veteran preacher. First, the outlines were not complete enough to be used by one not immediately familiar with them. "It is unwise to hoard ser-

¹⁵² Ibid., 62.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 75.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 120.

¹⁵⁵ *A Functioning Eldership* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1942) 14.

monic creations," the old gentleman had written, "if (the preacher) can be tempted to repeat them on unsuspecting hearers."¹⁵⁶

Second, and far more important, the outlines established the priority of Christ-centered preaching. The vast majority dealt with what Jesus did and said. Notable also was a secondary emphasis on the church. These were W. R. Walker's two great themes, supported significantly by Biblically expository sermons in series. The Christian home and youth received significant attention. But Christ came first!

The true gospel was not something that men could discover, not the product of human wisdom, but something God had revealed in the person of His Son Jesus. . . . It was a Jesus-centered message that caused the opposition (to the apostles). None of the persecutors would have objected seriously to an abstract doctrine affirming a resurrection; nor to a speculative discourse on "Immortality." But they refused to permit the name of Jesus to be coupled with the resurrection teaching, in any causal relationship.¹⁵⁷

Jesus' agenda for His ministers had two assignments: First, to "teach" as evangelists, persuading men to accept the forgiveness of sin by obedience to the gospel; second to "teach" His commandments and ideals having to do with "the perfecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, to the building up of the body of Christ; till all attain unto the unity of faith, unto a fullgrown man, unto the fulness of Christ."¹⁵⁸

Jesus did not prescribe *social remedies for social ills*. He knew that social injustice would not be removed by the substitution of one social order for another. . . . Jesus' entire energy was spent in *changing men*, knowing that desirable changes in laws and procedures would follow as surely as effect follows cause.¹⁵⁹

In all His teachings, Jesus never legislated for any but His disciples. He issued a call to all men to discipleship. If they refused to hear it, He had no further word for them. It is a waste of time to look for grapes on thorns, or figs on thistles.¹⁶⁰

The preacher of Christ will be like his Master, Mr. Walker insisted, being a *teacher* of the Word. The teacher must, of course, be himself a

¹⁵⁶ *A Ministering Ministry*, 81.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 132, 134.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 138-139.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 144-145.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 150-151.

capable student, and especially a student and teacher of the Bible. He may borrow materials—even sermons—from others capable in teaching and preaching the Word, but integrity demands that he announce his indebtedness for whatever he borrows.

Teacher

Teaching was inseparable from preaching in the ministerial assignment as W. R. Walker understood it. The seven years of youthful school teaching left their mark. The six years he spent in college teaching at Phillips Bible Institute and at Bethany represented only a small part of his commitment to college students. As previously noted, he majored in a teaching ministry to young people from Ohio State University through the Indianola church. In later years he urged the establishment of a graduate school for the preparation of Christian ministers. He favored a location at Columbus. His dream was at least partly fulfilled in the establishment of Emmanuel School of Religion at Johnson City, Tennessee.

His teaching ministry extended significantly through participation in Christian service camps, lectureships, and conventions. In these places also he recognized, and insisted on a recognition of, the bases and boundaries of assignment and responsibility.

As a trustee of the Lake James Christian Assembly at Angola, Indiana, he once interrupted a Missions Week lecturer who abused the privilege of the platform to engage in a harangue against a fellow missionary. Rising to a point of order, W. R. reminded the speaker that this was no part of what the program committee had invited him to do!

As a participant in a preaching-teaching rally, he once responded to a long and learned discussion on the question as to whether God hears and answers the prayers of “sinners.” Said Brother Walker, “It is the privilege of men to pray; it is the prerogative of God to do as He wishes about answering prayer.”

Brother Walker’s concept of authorized assignments sometimes led him to judgments not acceptable to all brethren, although the acceptance of his definition of any assignment made it very difficult to argue with his conclusion. He was never convinced, for example, that God approved the naming and numbering of Matthias as an apostle (Acts

1:15-26). The eleven had been commanded to wait for empowerment, he said; but instead they busied themselves with filling a vacancy in their organization. And the man selected was never again named among them.

Paul's description of a "bishop" or elder (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) he understood as just that, the *description* of an ideal servant of the Lord. Rigid application of its stipulations (beyond "that pertaining to general character") to any one man would be impossible, he argued. Hence, with the ideal before them, the congregation should choose the best possible leaders, expecting within its composite eldership to secure all the qualities needed.¹⁶¹

The description of the elder as "husband of one wife" means literally, in Paul's Greek, a "man of one woman." "One is led to suggest," wrote Mr. Walker, "that what Paul had in mind referred more to the moral chastity of an elder than to his marital state."¹⁶² With reference to the same stipulation he parenthesized, "(That bars women from the office, and this parenthesis is not intended to be facetious.)"

As to ordination services for elders and deacons, he wrote:

In the absence of both Scriptural teaching and example as to any ceremony, and in view of very doubtful authority for the entire procedure, it is rather fitting to raise a question about the propriety of anything like an "ordination" of church officers.¹⁶³

At no point was Brother Walker's position more controversial than in the question of weddings a minister might properly perform. As long as anyone pronounces a couple husband and wife "by the authority vested in me by the state (or commonwealth)," he is acting as an officer of the civil government, argued W. R., and as such an officer he has no right to refuse the service to any who come to him with a valid license requesting it. (Here is indeed a clear-cut acceptance of authority and assignment, but many ministers cannot separate this act and service from their other authorizations and assignments under Christ and the church.) Marriage itself Mr. Walker regarded as authorized by God's covenant with Adam, and therefore universal—not peculiarly Jewish or Christian, and not an ordinance of the church.

¹⁶¹ *A Functioning Eldership*, 75.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 72.

Conventions and Unity

No man contributed more than W. R. Walker to the shaping of convention life in the restoration movement. Always an interested observer and participant in gatherings of the brethren, he maintained that interest in accord with his conviction that the unity of the church was essentially local, and that Scriptural oneness is *within*, before it is *between or among* congregations:

No minister has a responsibility for Christian unity wider than the area, or congregation, in which he is serving. If he keeps that group Scripturally united he has met his full obligation. His jurisdiction does not extend beyond that border. If, by his teaching and ministrations, he prevents factionalism arising in the church he serves, and keeps it loyal to Christ in both doctrine and life, all working together in carrying out His program, he is a good minister. If division exists elsewhere, he is not responsible.¹⁶⁴

During the first thirty years of W. R. Walker's ministry the conventions that clustered around the "cooperative agencies" of the Christian churches seemed increasingly *not* to foster the unity of the local church in Biblical doctrine and policy. Accordingly in 1926-27 he and a half dozen others accepted the responsibility for planning and promoting a national convention designed for "defending, reviving, and furthering the plea" for the restoration of New Testament Christianity. It met first in Indianapolis, as the North American Christian Convention, and during the next twenty-three years eleven such conventions were held as the need seemed to warrant. (North American Conventions have met each year beginning with 1950.) W. R. Walker brought major sermons or addresses in seven of the first nine (1928, 1929, 1931, 1937, 1940, 1942, 1946), usually on themes relating to Christian unity.

In 1929 he was made a member of the committee that prepared and conducted the 1931 convention in Lexington, Kentucky. In 1937 he was named as one of the twenty-five men to prepare the next convention. He was chosen as chairman of the committee, in which capacity he would have presided over the convention, to be held October 9-13, 1940, in Indianapolis. In February of that year, however, he called attention to the fact that officers of the Standard Publishing Company did not serve in official capacity with boards and committees of the

¹⁶⁴ *A Ministering Ministry*, 204.

brotherhood. Since he was then president of the Standard company, he vacated the convention presidency, and P. H. Welshimer was chosen to occupy it.¹⁶⁵

Near this time a "continuation committee" for the NACC discussed at some length the possibility of establishing a working rapport with the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples). To which W. R. addressed himself characteristically, labeling the whole discussion out of order. "This committee," he said, "was chosen by the previous convention to do one thing and one thing only: to prepare and call another North American Christian Convention." And that is what it proceeded to do. Mr. Walker still maintained and encouraged brotherly and instructive attendance at conventions of more than one kind.

W. R. was seventy-seven years old when he addressed the 1946 North American convention on "The Authority of the Apostles." Nine years later he was called back, again to Cadle Tabernacle in Indianapolis, for what he declared to be his farewell address to the convention: "Thy King Commands!" James G. VanBuren presided over that convention, the last to be held in the Cadle building. Edwin V. Hayden was vice-president that year. Neither they nor any others in the audience are likely to forget the ovation that greeted W. R. Walker at his appearance and at his conclusion.

Author and Publisher

In addition to several hundred articles, published mostly by *Christian Standard*, Mr. Walker wrote half a dozen books bearing the Standard copyright. In bulk, the book publication came first, the articles and correspondence later. The books came from the years of his located ministry, and at least occasionally from lectures developed for colleges and ministerial groups. The articles and published correspondence were the rich fruit of his "retirement" years.

In 1914 he appeared with O. F. West and J. W. Kearney in the authorship of *Studies in Rural Life*. In 1923 and 1924 the Standard company produced his two-part series of lessons, *Studies in Acts*. In 1932 and 1933 came *Travel Letters from Palestine* (perhaps not published as a bound volume). 1938 brought his keystone work, *A*

¹⁶⁵ Information from the North American Christian Convention office, by courtesy of director Leonard G. Wymore.

Ministering Ministry. 1942 saw the publication of *A Functioning Eldership* and another paperback, *The Eldership and Christian Education*, in which his material was combined with chapters by James DeForest Murch.

An important part of the elders' responsibility, Brother Walker insisted, was to see that Biblically sound teaching material was used in the church's educational program. He wrote some of that material to be used by the churches generally; and he gave major attention to encouraging the preparation and production of such material at Standard. As trustee, vice-president, and for twenty years (1935-1955) president of the Standard Publishing Company, he bore responsibilities that were very real and significant, though expressed more in counsel than in on-the-spot administration. As Burris Butler (editor and officer with the company, 1944-1971) declares, "W. R. Walker kept Standard on course."

Material assets of the company were sold in 1955 to the Bolten interests, and in 1956 the fifteen-member Publishing Committee of the National Christian Education Convention became its counselor and advisor in religious publication. W. R. Walker, then past eighty-five years of age, became president-emeritus, but also an active charter member of the new Publishing Committee, where for several years he continued to render active service. Through the whole Standard Publishing enterprise he will continue to be a constructive influence as long as men have the capacity to remember Christ's basic teaching of authority, assignment, and responsibility: "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing" (Luke 12:42, 43).

If the returning Lord finds the restoration movement fulfilling His assignment, significant credit for the fact must go to W. R. Walker.

AN APPROACH TO RECONCILIATION

by Dean E. Walker

**“God was in Christ reconciling
the world unto himself.”**

No more succinct nor comprehensive summary of the mission of Jesus of Nazareth has come to my attention than this by Paul in his second letter to the Christians in Corinth (5:19). Nor is any more penetrating accusation against the Church as the most eminently respectable sinner known to me. For centuries, including the first, the Church has stood under indictment of sin, a sin barbaric and suicidal: dividing the Body of Christ. For centuries Christians have confessed this sin, have been scandalized, and have sought unity by various and sometimes amazing means.

One such confessing association initiated a reformation by extending an invitation to all Christians to join in a re-examination of the Church in the light of its nature and mission as seen in its origin, with a view to recapturing oneness that the world might believe in Christ (cf. John 17-23). We live within this confessing association, not only in our profession of faith, but in our profession as disciples of Emmanuel. Yet we are conscious of and troubled by tension among us, and apprehensive lest we ourselves yield to this persistent, insidious sin, counting others less than ourselves.

In this paper I offer a perspective on an approach to reconciliation, soliciting further study for our own time. I address our immediate situation within that movement which arose from the invitation issued in 1809 to all Christians, hoping that these comments may speak to many. What is involved is the mission of Christ, given to all who confess him as Lord, and thus the Giver of the mission and his purpose *sub specie aeternitatis*. I begin with a reminder of that which will be familiar to those having experience within this religious movement.

Of the number of those disenchanted with the expressions of Christian faith in the various denominations, the name of Thomas Campbell is remembered through his publication in 1809 of the *Declaration and Address* and especially through the reformation proposed therein and activated in a movement toward restoration of the Church to that form and life which had derived immediately from Jesus of Nazareth. In this proposal for reform, Campbell expressed agreement with the universal judgment that the Christian religion was designed "... to reconcile and unite men to God, and to each other, in truth and love ..."¹⁶⁶ This unity is to be found only "... in Christ and his simple word ..."¹⁶⁷ Our knowledge of this purpose and its expression in the person of Christ is to be found in "the Model" which is "... expressly exhibited in the New Testament ..."¹⁶⁸ Since the apostolic Church is "... as perfect (in constitution and management) as Christ intended should not this suffice us?"¹⁶⁹ Rarely has such penetrating discernment been so succinctly stated. On this basis Campbell entered a plea to all Christians of whatever party: "With you all we desire to unite in the bonds of an entire Christian unity—Christ alone being the *head*, the center; his word the *rule*—an explicit belief of and manifest conformity to it in all things—the *terms*. More than this you will not require of us; and less we cannot require of you."¹⁷⁰

To this end Campbell offered thirteen propositions, of which the first is both primary and representative.¹⁷¹ Here one notes three definitions: 1) The Church is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one. It is the Body of Christ. "Is Christ divided?" 2) All who profess faith in Christ and obedience to him in all things according to the Scriptures, and that *manifest the same by their tempers and conduct*, are properly called Christians. This is the Christian *character*. To bear the marks of Christ in his Incarnation is to be restored to God in the humanity and relationship to the Father in which we may cry "abba!" in recognition of our filial status in life. 3) No one else but Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. None comes to the Father but by Him. (cf. John 14:6) The religion of Christ is more than conformity to creed or code, more than spiritual assurance or mystical experience, more than philanthropy and social reform, however good these may be

¹⁶⁶ Frederick D. Kershner, *Christian Union Overture, An Interpretation of the Declaration and Address* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1923), 51.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 32.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 59.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 60.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 81.

when emanating from and pointing to the Christ. The Christian life is first of all a relationship to God through the mediating Messiah.

Action followed in the formation of the church at Brush Run in 1811, near West Middleton, Pennsylvania. They found it necessary to practice as well as to advocate reform. To disseminate his concept of the Church, Alexander Campbell launched the publication of *The Christian Baptist*. Walter Scott soon developed a simple manner of proclamation of the Gospel accompanied by an invitation to those who believed Christ to receive his baptism. This was revolutionary evangelism bearing little resemblance to "revivalism." The thousands so united to Christ found themselves in substantial fellowship with the similar movement led by Barton W. Stone. The reunion resulting developed into a "restoration movement" of substantial numbers and of accelerating growth. By the end of the fifth decade of the nineteenth century, the fellowship of "Disciples" (their preferred self-designation) had become a major factor in the religious life of the nation.

Tensions accompanied this expansion during the following years, without diminishing either the numbers of adherents nor the institution of service organizations in support of the Church. Conflicts over adaptation to a changing society did not impede progress. Education was cultivated through a variety of means, particularly at the college level. Disciples were involved in efforts to abolish slavery, to curb intemperance, and to minister to the disadvantaged. Societies were formed to arouse interest in and support of evangelistic work both here and in non-Christian lands. Missions were undertaken to extend the movement to European nations. This method of cooperation became the most serious focus of tension.

The question was resolved for the period following the Civil War to the close of the century by agreement to refuse status of Church constitutionality to such cooperative organizations, while agreeing that every Disciple and each congregation might, without prejudice, participate in them on a basis of voluntary action. Freedom of association, a principle illustrated in the Christian Association of Washington (Pennsylvania) from which the movement arose, was regarded as one valid way of exploring the frontiers of thought and action presented by each of the areas of cooperation. Competition was not discountenanced even within the same area and constituency. A way had been found to express widely differing individual conscience while honoring congregational integrity. Support of any cooperative ministry was not a religious obligation, but rested on a moral responsibility.

The same principle of freedom in association, with multiple choices as to the instruments of cooperation, was adopted in the convention life of the Disciples. Conventions were not bonds of Church regulation. They were consultatory fellowships for those electing to participate. They were valued stimuli of Christian life and action, nothing more.

As the twentieth century opened, two strains of thought developed, each uneasy in the climate of free association. Each advocated the adoption of a Church system for assuring responsible order in service organizations, and for establishing conditions under which such activities might enjoy recognition and endorsement as distinctly authorized representatives of the movement. One placed the locus of such judgment in the local congregation. The other found this locus in a structure of Church representatives that culminated in a national convention. We have not yet solved this problem. Instead, we have seen the difficulties compounded, animosities generated, misunderstandings multiplied. At the same time we have seen an increasingly uneasy conscience over ruptured fellowship surface in various ways and among many people in every aspect of the movement. Reconciliation is again a vision, a hope, and a goal of action.

I turn now to an examination of the role of the "High Church" concept within Restorationism. In this aspect of the movement (i.e., the "Churches of Christ"), the Church is emphasized as the creative work of Christ, founded at Pentecost in Jerusalem following the ascension of Jesus. He empowered the apostles to fashion the model for all subsequent order, worship, and life. Nothing not sanctioned in the New Testament can be added without demeaning the Church, perhaps perverting it. Worship, for example, is thought to be distorted by the use of instrumental music. Mission to non-Christians must be directed and supported by a specific congregation through its eldership, although other congregations may act through the eldership of the sponsoring church. Journals, publishing houses, colleges, and other service institutions all have private ownership and management. Support is sought on the basis of merit from individuals, although congregations may fund education of designated students and certain functions related to their growth.

Perhaps the philosophy of High Church is best understood as a design to exalt and sustain the congregation as responsible to Christ alone by permitting no subtle infusion of "human" culture into the apostolic life and order. Thus every action by the Church must be authorized by specific directive in Scripture, by necessary inference from Scriptural truth, or by having clear precedent in apostolic practice. The Church is a divine institution. Particular congregations have fel-

lowship in the Church catholic through strict adherence to the same order in governance and worship. This has been the High Church apologetic throughout history.

When a limited number of men, leaders in this thrust of the movement, sought and obtained a listing by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1906, they acted not as a separatist sect. Quite to the contrary, they sought recognition as a catholic, non-sectarian fraternity of apostolic sanction in which each congregation shared the same mind, ordinances, worship, and life, originating in Christ and described in that Word of God known as the New Testament. Such authority is not subject to impeachment nor to amendment. It is High Church—above all human control.

One negative result of this thrust must be noted. The subjection of all Church life and practice to the sanction of Scripture sometimes places a congregation in the necessity of exercising judgment in matters beyond the competence of its membership. Consultation with evangelists and teachers known to the members may yield little understanding. Journals known to the people may also be misunderstood or misinformed, may indeed be reflective of ill-balanced judgment. The result is that the common mind of the Church at large is not actually available at this point. The final effect is to lead the congregations either into sectarian division on one hand or into legalistic, adversarial contention on the other. Such phenomena have appeared in other High Church movements through the centuries.

A positive note may also be discerned. Societal and cultural disorder and moral decline in our own half century since 1914 are judged by many to be caused by the World Wars: international hostilities and arms accumulations, disruptions of economic stability, increasing dependence of the disadvantaged peoples suffering from a variety of oppressions, the rise of violence both in crime and in advocacy of justice, and the contempt for both law and human rights by a strange assortment of people in high and low places and motivated by both high and low moral goals. People discouraged by such conditions find the High Church position attractive. It is to be noted that in this period the Churches of Christ have quadrupled membership, have notably met intellectual challenges, and have found ways to collaborate in services to those who need Christian concern in practical terms.

Moreover, for some twenty years now one may discern among the Churches of Christ a disposition to find and widen paths to mutual understanding with all Christians. This reflects the newly maturing concept, stated originally in the *Declaration and Address*, concerning the nature of the Church and of Christian character. It rises primarily

from the constantly fresh study of the New Testament. This is to say that this open attitude is normal to the tradition involved in both the narrow and the catholic senses. Reconciliation may not be far ahead.

The conservative thrust of the movement, known as Disciples of Christ, is somewhat more complicated in that it comprises a rather uneasy coalition of those, on the one hand, who regard Church structure for organizational efficiency as belonging to the *esse* of the Church, and those, on the other, who regard it as belonging to the *bene esse* of the Church. In the language of Thomas Campbell, the distinction is one of "essential" versus "expedient."

The tensions giving rise to the conservative thrust were long developing, may be traced to varying causes, and have yet to be subjected to critical analysis. For whatever reasons, by the third decade of the present century sharp contention arose over the policy and strategy of several missionary societies and their affiliates in the local churches. Questions of comity in interdenominational missions, of the terms in which Disciples might participate in the Federal Council of Churches, and of the utility and validity of alternatives to established agencies or societies, were not resolved. Both advocates and critics pushed for decisions before a consensus could be reached, before full and free discussion could be frankly conducted and reasonable conclusions advanced in search for the "mind of Christ." A devoted ministry committed to the administration of agencies, on the one hand, and a devoted ministry committed to agency accountability, on the other, were left with no really open channel for consultation. "Establishment" and "Opposition" became parties contending for "causes" and "methods."

In 1926 the Establishment retained its hold at the International Convention of the Disciples of Christ in Memphis. The North American Christian Convention met in Indianapolis the year following, called by men sincerely active in the International Convention, hoping thereby to exhibit grounds for mutual consultations. In 1932 the International Convention appointed a Commission on Restudy of the Disciples of Christ with a view to this same objective. In 1942 and 1943 President William Shullenburger of the International Convention and President Dean Walker of the North American Convention offered each to his own board a plan to hold the two assemblies on overlapping dates in the interest of repair of fellowship. Walker was supported by his board; Shullenburger was rejected by his board. The Commission on Restudy submitted its report to the International Con-

vention in 1946, 1947, and 1948. It was condemned and refused publication by the Opposition and was quietly buried by the Establishment. The way to consolidation and centralization was now open.

The Council of Agencies undertook a wide-ranging study of this situation. Out of it grew a proposal, originating in the Board of Directors of the International Convention, that a study of the structure and function of the agencies in relation to the Convention be made, with a view to encouraging sensitive accountability to its clientele and to the Convention. From this move came the appointment of a "Panel of Scholars," whose proposed "Design for Restructure of the Disciples of Christ" was tentatively adopted in 1963. Under terms of this Provisional Design the concept of restoration was abandoned, the model of the formally structured denomination reflecting that presented in the Consultation on Church Union was adopted, and a tight system of control over the admission of congregations to the denomination was established. A formal Confession of Faith was provided, ordination of ministers was made a function of "Regional Ministers," and other regulations assured everyone that the Disciples were now to be regarded as one of the Protestant denominations.

We may measure the enthusiasm of the man in the pew for these controls by a declining Church membership, financial stringencies, and the refusal of agencies and societies to merge their endowments and surrender their prerogatives to the Central Board. It appears that some uneasiness of conscience arises at the prospect of submerging the New Testament concept of the Church apostolic in the concept of a well-managed business corporation. On the whole, Disciples in the churches regard the *congregation*, patterned after the apostolic form, as the inescapable locus for the cultivation of Christian meaning and life. The Word of God which they find in the Scriptures remains the one source from which they draw faith, assurance, and resolution. While not inclined to exchange formal cooperation in Christian actions for the "independent" (for them, irresponsible) concept of "faith missions," they retain the concept that the congregations of Christ are called into being by his Word, not by the consent of a denomination order. Their future I cannot predict.

The third trust of the movement may be termed the Christological, now commonly called the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, seemingly named from desperation *in extremum*. These Disciples, bereft (by Restructure) of traditional agencies, conventions, and institutions, found the means of cooperation to uninhabited. They promptly launched a vast number of "loyal" agencies: Bible colleges, faith mis-

sions, evangelistic fellowships, and regional conventions. Much valid criticism of these efforts has been received, sometimes with ill-concealed resentment, often with corrective effect. The numbers of agencies involved and their various programs give a somewhat accurate impression of proliferating chaos.

Unaccustomed to disciplined theological apologetic, these Disciples devised numerous theologies to justify their "independence." Thus they attacked the concept of the college of liberal arts on the supposition that the word "liberal" signified skepticism respecting revelation. Preference was for the Bible college, which was thought to offer Biblical studies as the sole requisite to a Christian ministry. Self-appointed missionaries needed only "faith" without much regard to other qualities in soliciting support. Having no press through which to encourage depth of thought and scholarly research, they turned to "evangelical" books presenting the very errors of "fundamentalism" from which their forebears had been rescued.

Such confusion was naturally to be expected. It must be emphasized that these extremes have gradually been dropped in favor of a more balanced and stable understanding of the situation in which man finds himself. This conviction is reinforced by the renewed interest in Biblical studies in relation to disciplines in the Arts and Sciences. Particularly important is the somewhat fumbling but genuine concern to find meaning in life through the event of the incarnation of Jesus. Equally significant is the growing realization that the entire revelation of God found in both Old and New Testaments centers in his Son. This means that further revelation would have to bear something surpassing Christ in order to be credible. I think I see now a more humble, more reverent people, served by a ministry of the same disposition, each increasingly measuring himself by "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. With this comes a genuine respect for one another in the Church, and a deference to each one as a son of God through Christ, in whom Christ now lives.

If this assessment be correct, then we may look to the future in keen anticipation that we shall see the permeation of society with the Christian mission, message, and ministry in living letters that all men may read and understand as the commendation of Christ's Word and Gospel. I would hope that you hear me saying that this is a goal realistically before us. I do not mean to endorse our current Biblical illiteracy. I regard no Church known to me as restored to the order and life held before it in the Word of God. I have little patience with our obsession with statistics, with our current professional clergy and its reach for preferment and status, with our permissive and prudential ethic, with our superficial piety and self-congratulation. But these

traits we have absorbed from the “religious culture” of the society in which we live. They will vanish in a truly Christological Church fellowship.

The import of this paper I suspect is now clear. I judge that the way to reconciliation of these three thrusts of the Restoration Movement will be long, difficult, often discouraging. But it must be always in our minds and hearts. It is the rational, moral, irenic and spiritual way — under constraint of the love of Christ. If we are to persuade the world that Christ is indeed the Reconciler of men to God and to one another, we must be bearers of the Incarnation that the world may have living support of our proclamation of Christ’s Gospel. This is the design of the restoration of the order and governance of the Church which pervades the entire *Declaration and Address* with which I began this paper. It is also the theme of the entire Bible — God cannot be God without the restoration of mankind to his proper humanity. What but man could God love? How else can God liberate the universe from disorder to his benevolent reign?

You see, we do not reconcile men by force, by excommunication, by assumption of superiority, by confessional complexities and codes of legal conduct. We build on what we have in common. We address men where they are in terms they understand. Here I have suggested some of the things we hold in common with all three thrusts within Restorationism; we recognize that now one of them, and now another, may excell. For this we are gratefully indebted to them all.

I invite comment and critique of the following items as grounds on which to approach reconciliation:

1. The Bible is the reliable account of God’s revelation to man of that which constitutes and assures salvation.
2. Reason, expressed in language addressed to the common sense of man in words employed in common usage, is the effective means of understanding the meaning of the Bible.
3. The New Testament is valid historical evidence for faith in Jesus the Son of God and Savior and is the sufficient directory for Christian life, individually and in community.
4. Faith in Christ is the Confession sufficient for the reception of his baptism.
5. The model of the Christian life and character is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah.

6. The Church in local congregation is the inescapable and constitutional *situs* of Christian fellowship, discipleship, and maturation of the Christian family of God.
7. Unity of Christians consists of that oneness in Christ in which Jesus and the Father are one.
8. Cooperation of Christians is requisite for effective spiritual manifestation of Christ to this world.
9. The love of God for this world, revealed in Christ Jesus, is the measure of man's love for his kin in Christ and for the world of men to whom we are sent with his Gospel.
10. Christian unity, supported in a life of the love exhibited in Jesus, is the predicate upon which the mission of Christ will be fulfilled.
11. The Christian mission is (a) to *proclaim* Christ that he may be *Lord*, (b) to *be* that Christ may be *seen*, (c) to *live* in restoration of *Christ's humanity* that he may make all things new in *restoring the universe to God*.

Surely these elements constitute ample common ground on which to find our lost sense of the sonship of which God assures us in the reception of Christ's baptism and in the fellowship sustained in our reception of Christ's Supper.

Restoration is the gracious act of God. Reception lies with us. Surely the tortured cry of this alienated world moves us to compassion. Compassion, tempered in the sufferings of Christ in which it is granted to us to share, lies at the heart of the mission on which we are sent. To what Christian is this strange?

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